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THE FORTNIGHTLY

FEBRUARY, 1952

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BY A CORRESPONDENT

REPORTS from Korea appearing in the United Kingdom press during recent months, written in some cases by very able correspondents, have contained substantial misinterpretations of such important events as the 1950 elections and have reflected vividly the serious limitations under which western reporters of Korean internal affairs must work.

Of these limitations the first is language. Few non-Koreans indeed speak Korean. Few Koreans speak western languages, and of those who do many are not qualified to represent the thoughts and views of their countrymen. The language barrier nevertheless is not impenetrable to anyone who speaks Japanese. Moreover at least some sections of public opinion are reflected in translations made from the Korean press, while the brief reports prepared in English of the debates in the National Assembly are of particular interest and value since, in the view of the United Nations Commission on Unification and Rehabilitation, these debates are often genuinely representative of public feeling.* Finally, as in older democratic countries, a reliable, although rare and limited, test of public opinion is provided by elections.

Even when a correspondent has obtained information from these sources however he may easily misinterpret it through false analogy with the countries of his experience. Reports often—to take a random example—divide the Assembly into parties supporting and opposing the Government. But the terms “Party”, “Government” and “Opposition” have for us definite and technical implications which are inapplicable to Korean circumstances. It is therefore necessary, if one wishes to interpret Korean politics aright, first to understand these circumstances; and this in turn requires either extensive experience within a Korean social environment, or at least some knowledge of the social history of Korea in this generation.

* * * *

Unfortunately concise information on the recent history of Korea

* Report of the U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, United Nations, New York, 1951, Paragraph 152.

is not easily accessible. Hulbert's *History of Korea* (2 vols. Seoul, 1905) and *The Passing of Korea* (New York, 1906) give some account of earlier history under the loose Chinese suzerainty, as does M. Frederick Nelson's *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1946). From these it is possible to appreciate the deep influence which Chinese ideas have had upon the development of Korean culture and society. These political histories however do not emphasize such social phenomena as, for instance, the contributions—something between voluntary subscriptions and an imposed tax—which it has been customary for local officials in the Far East to levy, upon their appointment and whenever thereafter exceptional public need arises. Yet these levies have been taken since the seventh century in Japan and probably earlier in China and Korea. When they are criticized in the National Assembly to-day therefore members are condemning not illegal innovations of a corrupt police but only the *abuse* of an ancient and tolerated custom. The abuse in some cases may even result from excess of zeal for the public good although it often springs from personal greed.

Another heritage which the histories do not stress is the association of traditional oriental forms of government with the quite exceptional corruption and inefficiency of the last days of the Korean monarchy. This has probably been a major cause of Korean enthusiasm for a republican democracy of which they have had no experience and little understanding. It must be remembered that until 1945 virtually the only source from which Korea could obtain knowledge of democratic institutions was Japan, and Japan failed signally to extend to Korea even such representative institutions as she had herself adopted.

Grajdanzev's *Modern Korea* (New York, 1944) gives a well-documented, if uninspiring, account of the shortcomings of Japanese rule in the country from 1910 to the beginning of the Pacific war. The author does not indeed recognize that the Japanese intended to treat the Koreans as equals in the measure in which they could assimilate themselves to their masters ; and he does not discuss the temperamental incompatibility between the two peoples which aggravated the faults of the Japanese administration. He shows in detail only the results, which were that while Korea enjoyed unaccustomed peace and a developing economy, the standard of living of the natives did not rise ; and while opportunities for education were increased, the alien language in which instruction was given ensured that Koreans were almost always outstripped by Japanese in scholastic achievements and in professional careers. Nevertheless, at least elementary education and technical skills became widespread under Japan's domination, thus preparing Koreans to fulfil the lower and middle rôles of a more highly developed society, although denying them the

opportunity to learn the higher, co-ordinating functions. But this marked lack of Koreans with either the education, training or experience required for higher administrative, judicial, economic or political positions has been one of the greatest—apart from the Communist menace, perhaps the greatest—of the handicaps which the Republic of Korea, and, earlier, the American Military Government, have had to face.

When United States forces landed in Korea in September 1945, primarily to accept the surrender and arrange the repatriation of Japanese forces, they retained initially a number of senior Japanese officials under their orders and thus incurred much unpopularity among the Koreans. Subsequently they endeavoured to govern directly in part by administrative order and in part by the promotion or appointment of those Koreans who seemed most suitable. A particularly unsatisfactory feature of this system was the undue influence which it gave to the handful of able interpreters who formed its indispensable nodal point. Meanwhile self-appointed "People's Committees" had already sprung up in south as well as in north Korea. That in Seoul was headed by a respectable Marxist afterwards assassinated. The briefest examination of these committees' credentials however showed that they represented no more than a fraction of the population, and their claim to power had at once to be publicly resisted. Other organizations and parties multiplied rapidly, but were equally unable to substantiate their claims to be representative. The total number of alleged members far exceeded the population of the entire country. In these circumstances the United States, at the Moscow Conference in December 1945, proposed a period of trusteeship for Korea. This was so unpopular in Korea that certain right-wing groups used the opportunity for an attempted *coup*. The Moscow decision in favour of trusteeship was announced on December 27, 1945. On the 31st the right-wing "Provisional Government" which had returned from Chungking ordered a strike of government employees. They maintained parades and demonstrations for the first three days of 1946, but since the police remained at their posts and kept order the strikes petered out and the *coup* failed.

The Communists, who had taken a leading part in protesting against trusteeship, also planned a demonstration for January 2, 1946. On the evening before, however, their headquarters decided (or were told) that since the Soviet Union had agreed to trusteeship they should reverse their stand. The Communist paraders next morning, as a result, carried ludicrously contradictory banners and shouted contradictory slogans. On the following day "support for the Moscow decisions" became the party line and was used by the

Russians in the Soviet-American negotiations, as a shibboleth to exclude all save Communist-dominated parties from any share in initiating a Korean Government to reunite the country. These dreary negotiations, which led to the ultimate American appeal to the United Nations, have been sufficiently summarized in United States and United Nations documents, as well as in the United Kingdom White Paper on Korea (Cmd. 8078) of 1950.

Developments within south Korea, from 1945 to 1949, are described in more detail in George M. McCune's *Korea To-day*.^{*} This book, however, perhaps from a desire to be scrupulously dispassionate, fails to reflect the colour of these four lurid years. In October 1946, a savage riot in Taegu resulted in the deaths of more than fifty policemen. The author does not mention that the revulsion caused by the massacre was believed in Korea to be a chief cause of the temporary withdrawal of the Korean Communists from public notice. When the party re-emerged it was in the disguise of a "Labour Party". It plotted or attempted revolution normally twice or thrice each year, meeting on every occasion effective resistance from the police. One of the abortive revolts was found to have been organized in part by a senior Russian official staying in Seoul as a guest of the Americans. A more successful revolt which cost much time and many lives to put down occurred in 1948 at Yosu in the south of the peninsula. Another, in 1950, which was staged entirely by guerrillas infiltrated across the 38th parallel, was apparently intended to play a part in the invasion. It was in fact effectively put down but seems to have drawn off substantial reserves of south Korean troops who might otherwise have stiffened the resistance to the main north Korean attack of June and July 1950.

Mr. McCune in describing these troubles seems unwilling to apportion the greater blame to either side and suggests, without concrete evidence, that much of the "leftist opposition" was provoked by police terrorism. The police were undoubtedly widely feared. But as to the side from which the initial provocation came all the reliable evidence points one way.

One example of the attitude of the public may be seen in Cheju (Quelpart) island off south Korea where the insurgents, said to be receiving reinforcements and supplies from north Korea, kept the island in turmoil for three years. The bulk of the population eventually deserted their lands to seek the protection of the police in the towns.

As in Cheju island so in Korea as a whole the movements of the population are an index of the attitude of the people towards the two sides in the struggle. From mid-1945 to mid-1950 more than a tenth,

^{*} Published by Allen and Unwin (London 1950).

probably about a fifth, of the inhabitants of north Korea fled to the south, and since the temporary occupation of the north by United Nations forces something like a third of the inhabitants have endeavoured to fly from the renewal of Communist rule.

It is true that the police of the Republic of Korea are harsh in the treatment of suspects as well as of convicted criminals. It is true also that the methods which they use are those learned from the Japanese and include something resembling "Thought Control". The Koreans indeed lack even that suavity which normally characterizes the Japanese. But it is equally true that they are devoted to duty and zealous, when occasion demands, against law-breakers of the political right as well as of the left. Although their ruthlessness may have increased with the increase of the threats which they have to face, there is no evidence that Koreans in general expect or desire the police to adopt during the present war the respect for the rights of the individual which we in the west now take for granted—at least in times of peace—but which has never yet been enjoyed in Korea.

A particular characteristic of the police which requires explanation is their allegedly partisan support for President Rhee. No evidence has been adduced to suggest that police loyalty was bought. It does not appear to have been simply made over to Dr. Rhee by the American Military Government, who preferred indeed his more accommodating rivals, Kim Koo and Kim Kyu-sik. It seems rather to have been won by the President's consistency in refusing any form of compromise with the Communist enemy, and perhaps also by his apparent avoidance of the political assassinations or violence with which at one time or another most of his rivals, of the right and left alike, have been associated.

It has been suggested that police support brought the President to power. This however is contradicted by the report of the United Nations Temporary Commission of 1948. Here again the author of *Korea To-day* suggests that the conclusions of the Commission should be set against "many unofficial reports", some of which maintained that the elections were "conducted in an atmosphere of terrorism." The three hundred pages of annexes of the 1948 Commission's report however contain evidence, of incomparably greater value than vague references to unofficial observers. The net result of police activity was in fact so to curb attempted terrorism as to allow the substantially free expression of the will of the people.

From this election resulted the first Assembly which adopted a Constitution on the United States model giving the President wide executive powers and four years' security of tenure subject only to impeachment. This provision was deliberate and it is worth noting

that another Far Eastern country, the Philippines, some years ago took the same decision in view of the need felt there also for a strong executive. For themselves the assemblymen reserved, besides the functions of legislature, only the rights of interpellation of Ministers of budget control and of veto over the President's choice of Prime Minister. During the two years of the first Assembly's life the extraordinary demands of the situation and the inexperience of the administration aroused great irritation in the Chamber. Owing to the rudimentary nature of the party organization and the absence of party discipline this irritation was vented in largely-ineffectual criticism, unconstitutional votes of "no confidence" and unco-ordinated legislative plans. In the resultant frustration the majority of the Assembly wished to amend the Constitution to introduce a system of Cabinets responsible to the Legislature. When the amendments came to the vote however the number of abstentions sufficed to defeat them.

The elections of 1950 enjoyed the same extraordinary advantage of being observed by a reasonably unbiassed, privileged and international United Nations Commission as did those of 1948. They must similarly be accepted by anyone willing to credit good evidence as a genuine reflection of the public will, but they have been much misinterpreted by the press in this country. The fact that most of the former members were unseated showed public dissatisfaction and a desire for change but can hardly be interpreted as a Government defeat since the only Government party in the first Assembly was in a minority. Still less can it be considered an Opposition victory since the only formal Opposition—that of the left—has nominally been unrepresented in either Assembly. Both Assemblies appear to have contained a handful of members who for patriotic or personal motives have acted ambiguously ; but these have lacked support alike from the country and from their colleagues. The very great majority in both Assemblies alike have been sincere patriots inexperienced in democratic machinery, struggling to remedy the glaring defects in an equally inexperienced administration.

The National Democrat Party has shown more cohesion than other groups and may well in future produce true parliamentary statesmen. A number of other groups and independents have, quite recently, attempted to combine themselves into a new Government Party. If they were to find sufficient common ground and submit to party discipline they might have a clear majority in the House. Despite their general support of the Government however they are unlikely to forgo the right to interpellate, criticize and on occasion bully the Ministers for the short-comings of the administration.

But it is noteworthy that in these harsh criticisms of the Govern-

ment which are so striking a feature of parliamentary life in Korea, a certain respect is normally shown for the ageing President. His temperament is autocratic. He is said to indulge his favourites. He controls his Ministers over closely in such matters as finance where his skill and training are probably less than theirs. He has said some tactless things about this country, contrasting democracy with monarchy. But he remains the outstanding figure of Korean politics, the campaigner for independence during forty years who has never compromised and never lowered his aims for any immediate advantage.

The suggestion, often repeated in the western press, that Dr. Rhee is a right-wing extremist involves another misleading use of western political terminology. His economic policy inclines to the left. For Korean industry he favours a high degree of nationalization. He has been the principal driving force behind the 1949 land reforms, which, in the opinion of the present United Nations Commission*, reflect great credit on the Republic. There is no doubt that he is in intention the representative not of any one class or interest but of the whole Korean nation. He wishes now to emphasize this by amending the Constitution to allow of his direct election by the people. And on the available evidence it appears that most of the citizens of the Republic accept him at this valuation. Interrogation of refugees and the experience of the United Nations forces during the occupation of north Korea in 1950 suggest that even in the Communist zone many regard him as their national leader. It was for this that the first Assembly elected him in 1948, and if he stands for re-election this year it seems not improbable that the second Assembly may elect him again.

* * * *

What has been said may serve to throw some light on the present political situation in south Korea. In view of the concern of the United Nations with Korean affairs however a glance at the future may also be in place. The reunion of the two halves of Korea and the defence of independence are international problems which purely Korean politics are powerless to solve. There is no evidence that a free north Korea would prove to be politically much different from the south. Indeed the U.N. Commission believe† that free opinion in the north has generally favoured joining the Republic of Korea as at present constituted. A reunited Korea if it could be achieved would be capable of a more balanced economy than a truncated south ; but its economy would still need to be largely rebuilt through the genero-

* Op. cit. Paragraph 320.

† Op. cit. Paragraph 121.

sity of its friends.

Democratic institutions however have been accepted and have been preserved or even, in some directions, developed during the present war. A continuation of United Nations interest exercised through commissions residing in the country, with occasional debates in the General Assembly, would encourage further development and has been recommended by the present United Nations Commission.*

But it is probably in the field of administration that the United Nations can give Korea the most striking future assistance. The country has inherited from Japan a keener appreciation of efficiency than is to be found in some other Far Eastern countries. The Koreans have moreover a devotion to education for its own sake more passionate than in any other country of which the writer has experience. These virtues have become overlaid by inefficiency, faction and corruption spread by the present upheaval, but have by no means been lost. It may therefore be possible, with a mere handful of first-class advisers lent by the leading United Nations, to reorganize the Government, the economy and the finance of the country, to improve the fiscal, judicial and penal systems and to train a generation of able and upright administrative civil servants. This may prove in the long run, of all the forms of help which we can give, the most useful for the attainment of genuine independence in unhappy Korea.

* Op.cit Paragraph 371.

THE EGYPTIAN IMPASSE

By C. H. BROWN

THE epoch of Egyptian history which began in 1798 with the landing of Napoleon ended in October 1951, when Nahas Pasha announced the abrogation of the 1936 Treaty of Alliance with England. The period is sharply differentiated from the years that went before, and the years yet to come, for it was then that Egypt came under direct European influence, and accepted it with comparative willingness. Throughout the period, which begins with England and France fighting on Egyptian soil and in Egyptian territorial waters, and takes almost in its stride the English occupation of 1882, there has been opposition to the invaders.

The main influences of the century and a half may be briefly summarized. Napoleon did not stop long in Egypt, but he brought with him, or induced to follow him, a team of experts and servants. Many of these stayed long after he had left. Their influence remained even longer, and left French culture as the dominating one in educated Egyptian minds. Only recently, as the aftermath of the Cromer régime, has English become the main foreign language of the country, while French street names like 'Champollion' have survived in Cairo, presumably now to be swept away with all the other foreign words by the prevailing xenophobia.

A few Frenchmen entered government service under the Albanian adventurer Mohamed Ali, who founded the present dynasty in the early years of the nineteenth century. These French experts must have some of the credit for the development of modern Egypt, though a more lasting mark was perhaps made by the archaeologists and *litterati* who were financed from academic sources in France. It was they who initiated the serious study of Egyptian problems, on the foundations of which later generations built.

Mohamed Ali has considerable fame in Egypt to-day, not only as the ancestor of her modern kings, but also as the effective founder of modern government in a country where this art had for centuries lain dormant. How far the title of 'Great' is justified by his intellectual status is difficult to judge at this distance. He had a virgin field to work in, and he had the spirit of the times on his side. The rudiments of a civil service which he created were a faint copy, perhaps appropriate to the circumstances, of the more developed governmental

systems of England and France.

As the patron of the French textile engineer, Jumel, Mohamed Ali has a more certain claim to fame. Jumel had been invited to Egypt to organize a cotton spinning industry. His attempt to do so met with only temporary success, but from his discovery of a plant growing in a Cairo garden starts the whole history of Egyptian long staple cotton as it is known to-day. Jumel realized the possibilities of this plant and brought it to the notice of his patron, who in turn seems to have been equally impressed, and who took active steps first to encourage and later to enforce the growing of the new crop. The venture proved extremely successful, and the importance of cotton in the economic life of the country grew steadily. It was finally the American Civil War which fixed the crop firmly as Egypt's main economic basis. The fibre which had been steadily getting more appreciated suddenly became indispensable.

The increasing interest of Lancashire spinners in Egyptian cotton paralleled and to some extent stimulated the increasing political influence of England on Egypt. As Mohamed Ali's heirs got deeper into debt, English financiers came to exercise a larger share of influence, culminating in Disraeli's spectacular purchase of Suez Canal shares from the bankrupt Ismail Pasha.

With the British occupation in 1882 began the direct political control which was ended nominally in 1922. It was then that the Turkish suzerainty, which had been changed to an open British Protectorate with the declaration of war in 1914, was replaced by a new sovereign State. Some points were admittedly reserved in the 1922 Declaration of Independence, including the right to station British troops on Egyptian soil. It was not until 1936 that an Egyptian government could be found willing to sign, apparently of its own free will, a treaty granting this right which Britain had previously unilaterally claimed.

So we come to the Egypt of to-day, to a generation which overlaps that of the Cromer régime. It was under Cromer that the British influence which began openly in 1882 reached its culminating point. It seems to be the basic psychological tragedy of modern Egypt that this influence is so openly deplored. The disinterested observer can see only good in the irrigation system with which the names of Sir William Willcocks and Sir Murdoch Macdonald will always be associated. The present generation of senior Egyptian irrigation engineers were juniors under these men, and in almost all branches of the public service we can see the results of a similar influence of the British advisers of Cromer on the officials of to-day. More recently the cotton research work started by Dr. W. L. Balls in 1904 has been built up, with the addition of a spinning test mill in 1935, to a degree of competence which has played a considerable part in

strengthening the technical position of Egyptian cotton.

These monuments of British work in Egypt remain, some of them, including the educational system, having maintained a nucleus of British staff right up to the end. The end, now here, is the Egyptian cabinet's decision, in December 1951, to dismiss all British experts in all branches of the government service. The number of these officials was perhaps at its peak in the early 1920's, when practically every branch of Egyptian life was under English influence, and English traffic policemen stood on point duty in the main towns. These officials have been gradually reduced by death, retirement, or replacement by trained Egyptians. It was generally admitted, however, as much by educated Egyptians as by foreign observers, that the nucleus of experienced experts remaining had a value greater than their numbers. It follows that the December decision, obviously a direct result of the treaty abrogation of October, will probably be a more direct loss to Egypt than to the displaced experts themselves.

Leaving on one side, as being outside the scope of this article, the major political and military issues raised by the unilateral abrogation, the deeper long-term aspects of the present Anglo-Egyptian impasse merit serious consideration. This final break with the remaining British experts in government service is only the culminating point in a growing anti-western nationalism which has been obvious for some time. The country seems quite unaware that she is putting the clock back, that she is copying the European jingoism of centuries ago. Serious English thinking has long ago grown out of this kind of attitude into a more sober realization of its relative place in a kaleidoscope of evolving world culture. Egypt seems at present completely oblivious of this world culture, and unaware of the real contribution she could make to it if only she would see her own position in a spirit of more sober objectivity.

It is above all the sobriety and the objectivity of western thinking which one misses in Egypt to-day. Although a few, unfortunately only a few, leading men appreciate the impossible position into which the country's whole attitude is putting her, the majority seem quite unaware of it. No silliness of exaggeration or of emotionalism seems too ridiculous to find utterance in speech or in writing and to be believed by the semi-educated to whom it is addressed. Once taken up, there is no going back on these exaggerations for fear of being dubbed a defeatist or a traitor.

The attitude towards Israel is as good an example of this as any. The whole country talks as though a cultural and economic boycott of Israel could be maintained for ever, and it is government policy to refuse to sit at the same table as Jewish delegates at any international conference, while the existence of a Jewish menace is everywhere believed in. It is the emotionalism of this kind of extravagance

which is its most objectional feature to the more sober western mind. Behind our contemporary political and social doubts, and forming their more hopeful and attractive side, there is a philosophy of scepticism, of a deep feeling that under-statement is safer than over-statement. This kind of scepticism is unknown in most modern Egyptian thinking.

Feeling so sure that she needs neither western expert help nor military aid, that her salvation can be achieved by a form of economic isolationism, has Egypt also any clear idea of where this will lead to ? The whole attention of the country is now given to "the national cause", as it is rather naïvely called. Supposing for a moment that her major aspiration, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, were realized, how is Egypt equipped to face her own problems by herself ? In considering this, and forgetting for the moment the Sudan issue as the red herring it almost certainly is, we see immediately what little thought is being given to these questions by Egyptians themselves.

There are three prevalent ideas abroad in Egypt to-day, which many of her countrymen appear to rely on as solutions. The first of these is industrialization, which, with no great analysis of cause and effect, is taken as almost synonymous with civilization. A further assumption is that little is necessary but the will to action, and there is scant patience either with those who point out the difficulties or with those who doubt the advantages of urbanizing a peasant mentality which has many attractive features. In truth all the requirements for modern industry in Egypt are absent. She has no coal, only moderate oil resources, and no iron ore except the much discussed but hitherto unworked deposits lying in the desert near Assuan. Electrification of the Assuan dam has been long talked of, and is exactly typical of those major projects which seem so difficult to get implemented under modern political conditions.

Where cotton spinning is concerned all seem agreed. Why ship raw cotton to Lancashire to be spun, and then ship back the finished goods ? The industry founded as a result of such questionings is the largest in Egypt to-day. Mills were designed and equipped with modern English machinery, and even with a relatively inefficient labour supply satisfactory goods are turned out. Technically, the project must be counted a success, but in its economics serious difficulties are apparent. Even the worst cotton grown in Egypt is fairly high quality by world standards, but it is used for a mass production article which would normally be made of cheaper cotton abroad, either American or Indian. The obvious solution of importing cheaper foreign cotton is turned down because it cuts at the roots of the *raison d'être* of the industry : to process a local raw material. So the double device of high tariffs on competitive goods, and of

subsidies both open and concealed, has been necessary to make cotton spinning pay. The difficulty is to see what economic gain there is to the country as a whole. The consumer clearly pays more than he would need to do if his cheap fabrics were imported, while the burden on the budget of continual assistance to the industry is far from negligible. The true account is perhaps too difficult to calculate. Certainly no Egyptian attempts to calculate it.

The case is much the same for the second prevalent form of economic nationalism, which is a reluctance to rely too much on the cotton growing in which Egypt really does seem to hold all the trump cards. With the population increasing, it has become necessary to import food-stuffs, mainly wheat and maize. A widespread belief exists that this is against the prestige of an agricultural country, and so the scales are deliberately weighted in favour of cereal growing. Export taxes on cotton and import taxes on wheat not having sufficed to produce what is believed to be a natural balance, recourse is had to a legal minimum acreage of wheat for every farmer. It is difficult to see how the financial loss thus forced on the individual farmer can represent a national gain, since the cotton grown by an acre is exchangeable on world markets for more wheat than this same acre can grow. The fact that cotton already provides 75 per cent. of the whole country's exports is surely proof of its natural suitability. It would seem that such an excellent and reliable source of foreign exchange could safely be depended on even more than is done at present. When Egyptian cotton fails to find a market, the resulting price drop would automatically lead farmers to prefer other crops without government direction.

The third dominant idea in modern Egypt is the belief in an army. It is to be not the kind of army which Egypt had in the bad old days of foreign occupation, but a large, well-equipped and independent force. Like other minority ideas in a country where disagreement soon comes to be stigmatized as heresy, opposition to this is seldom voiced in public. Yet the proposal seems tragically naïve. Who in the world could even the best Egyptian army be equipped to fight? The lessons of Holland and Belgium in 1940 do not seem to have been learnt in Egypt. The real objection to a large Egyptian army seems however an economic one. Already many projects of possible social reform are shelved or delayed by the prior claims of money for arms. The whole attitude is the bitterest fruit of modern nationalism run wild. The spectacle of all the devotion and thought which could go to social reform being given to arming and thinking in terms of armed strength is a depressing one. The country simply is not wealthy enough to support the army which Egyptians have in mind without imposing poverty on the civilian economy. Nor, as we have seen, are there any ready means of increasing national wealth;

on the contrary, the present high prices of cotton may not last, while the population increase goes on inexorably.

No study of the position in which Egypt finds itself to-day could be complete without laying the greatest possible emphasis on the population problem. It is becoming a familiar one now in all under-developed countries, and Egypt is a typical example of the way the problem arises. Public health services, with the assistance of modern drugs, reduce the death-rate, but there are no similar factors in operation to reduce the birth-rate. The resulting quarter of a million of population increase per year has no natural outlets and no significant increase in land area is possible.

It is a common diagnosis that such a situation can only lead to a social revolution, of which the country is already on the brink. It is further suggested that this is only being postponed by diverting the attention of potential revolutionaries to the supposed menace without. The theory is plausible, but I do not myself see any evidence of it being correct. It implies a two-facedness in the ruling classes, since on this theory their political antagonism to England is insincere. My own reading is that, however mistaken, shallow and over-emotional this antagonism is, it is sincere, and that its holders are imprisoned in their own fallacious *mystique*.

The supposition that there are potential sources of social revolt in Egypt rests too much on the assumption that there ought to be such sources. But the peasants are completely unorganized and leaderless and accept their lot with characteristic oriental fatalism, while the new urban proletariat seems equally devoid of leaders with any serious claim to the title. These growing numbers of town artisans, and the increasing army of poorer white-collared workers have many grievances. Their lot is in some ways more difficult than that of the peasants precisely because their economic and social aspirations are greater. But not many blame the rulers for their difficulties. In Egypt the rich and powerful seem to be respected still by the average man. After all it is they and they alone who are able to give or to withhold that all important job for one's needy relative. The system is a pernicious one, but it is accepted, and cabinet ministers do not easily allow staff commissions the final word on appointments.

The conclusion must be that any serious social revolution, apart from an occasional outbreak of rioting, needs a clearer idea of aim and method and a better sense of organization than exist among the dispossessed in Egypt.

(The author worked with the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture from 1921 to 1951.)

THE CULT OF PETAINISM IN FRANCE

BY DAVID THOMSON

EX-MARSHAL PETAIN is dead, but Pétainism lives on. Circumstances have conspired, during the past year, to give it new life. The drift away from the left in French politics has brought new advantages to the forces of the right which suffered eclipse seven years ago ; the weakness and instability of the Fourth Republic have bred disillusionment amongst moderates, and have reinforced the arguments of the traditional critics of parliamentary democracy ; the punishments and civil disabilities imposed after liberation on ' collaborators ', Vichy supporters and ' purged ' civil servants have come to seem out of place seven years after liberation, and even the Gaullists, heirs of the mantle of anti-Communism which Pétain wore for four years, now demand a general amnesty. A comprehensive amnesty bill comes before the National Assembly in the New Year, and its measures are undoubtedly wise. It remains to be seen whether it will operate quickly enough to kill the new *mystique* of Pétainism which made such headway in the second half of 1951. The old man's death in prison, and his burial on the Ile d'Yeu last July, gave an opening to all who sought to obliterate their own past mistakes, follies or crimes by a posthumous vindication of the Marshal's rule at Vichy. Even a former British subject, who took French nationality from Pétain's hands, joined in the chorus of adulation.* Is it possible amidst so much excitement and confusion, to form any balanced view of the place of Pétain in French history ?

The factors in French history are extraordinarily constant, and if French history tends to form itself into an oddly repetitive pattern it is because French politics are so incorrigibly retrospective. The present controversy about Pétain, which is a dispute entirely about the past, reveals all these normal characteristics. It was no novelty in 1940 for salvation to be sought through the wisdom of the elders. In 1870, after the disaster of Sedan, it was Adolphe Thiers, at 73, who was called upon to save the nation. In 1917, at the climax of the war, it was Georges Clemenceau at 76 who undertook to lead France to victory. In 1934, when the Republic seemed in danger from the effects of the world economic crisis and the antics of the Fascist leagues, it was " Papa Doumergue ", at 77, who was recalled from

* Sisley Huddleston : *Pétain : Patriot or Traitor ?* Dakers. 15s.

retirement to tide over the crisis, and it was Marshal Pétain, at 78, who became his Minister of War. So in 1940 it was natural, after General Weygand (aged 73) had reported that he could not stem the German advance into France, that Marshal Pétain should be asked (on Paul Reynaud's suggestion) to form an emergency government. He was then 84. In every major national crisis of the last eighty years France has turned for salvation to a septuagenarian ; except in 1940, when it was to an octogenarian.

When Pétain sought and obtained from the hastily summoned National Assembly a vote of emergency powers to devise a new constitution, it was equally characteristic that his régime should attract the enthusiastic support of the inveterate anti-parliamentarians of the *Action française*, led by Charles Maurras, and earn for Vichy the nick-name of "the revenge of the anti-Dreyfusards." The Third Republic, both in its institutions and in its party leaders, was as much discredited by the defeat of 1940 as Bonapartism had been by the defeat of 1870. The four years during which Pétain was Head of the State at Vichy were used by all the anti-republican forces to pour scorn on its record and to victimize its former leaders. The trials at Riom, in 1942, were staged in order to shift all blame for the defeat on to the shoulders of the parliamentary leaders, especially Blum, Daladier and Reynaud. Only when their spirited defence threw some of the blame back on to the heads of the generals who had left the French army and air-force so ill-prepared and ill-equipped were the trials called off.

The case for the Vichy Government was—and it still is—that it was a material and a tactical advantage for France to have a government which might act as something of a shock absorber between the demands of the Germans and the helpless people of France. The original strength of Vichy was simply that it was an authority with which the Germans were prepared to negotiate. From the needs of Germany in 1940, even at the moment of victory over France, it snatched by means of the armistice the four planks of material power which it was later able to use as a basis for semi-independence. These were the rights to administer the unoccupied zone, to maintain an "armistice army" of 100,000 men, to command the bulk of the French fleet in the Mediterranean ports, and to keep control over the colonies. Except for the few colonial territories which joined the Free French in 1940, Vichy retained all these assets intact until November 1942. The allied occupation of French North Africa deprived it of all save its Far Eastern colonies. It led to the German occupation of the whole of France and the dissolution of the "armistice army", and this in turn led to the scuttling of most of the fleet at Toulon. Thereafter, Pétain ruled at Vichy more clearly on German sufferance and more directly under German pressure

And until liberation the only assets of Vichy were the nimble wits of Pierre Laval and the *mystique* of Pétainism, which kept remote colonial governors like Admiral Decoux in Indo-China loyal to it.*

It is misleading, therefore, to generalize about the period of the Vichy Government as a whole. It changed in purpose and even in substance, as well as in personnel, with each phase of the war. But the constant factor, which grew in significance throughout the whole period, was the appeal of Pétain himself. At first, he was popularly conceived as the veteran 'Victor of Verdun', the most distinguished living Marshal of France, called to save what he could from the ruin of the nation. Then, thanks to the labours of the *Action française* and the other forces of traditionalist reaction, he was exalted into the object of a cult. Ministers took an oath of fidelity to 'his person'. He was given a personal guard of honour and a personal flag. Stamps and coins were issued bearing his effigy. The Vichy press lavished adulation upon him, and treated him as a sort of substitute-king. A series of acts provided for the 'succession', Laval and Darlan becoming in turn the 'Dauphin'. There grew up at Vichy a veritable court. The régime wooed, with some success, the Roman Catholic Church. Successive ministers bore the burden of blame for unpopular measures, and only latterly was any of the blame transferred to Pétain himself. He served, in short, as the focus for a remarkable degree of personal loyalty and semi-regal prestige, which undoubtedly did something to preserve some degree of national cohesion in conditions of humiliation and despair.

The core of his popular appeal was that he could claim to have "stood by a stricken France"; that though others might wield the sword, he would try to be a shield. This was the note struck in the first *communiqué*, issued on the day that the armistice was signed: "The Government has considered it its duty to stay in France, to share the fate of all Frenchmen." Or, as Laval put it more racily: "You can't defend France by leaving her." As a man old enough to remember the previous national defeat, for he was a boy of 14 in 1870, Pétain became the symbol of survival in spite of adversity and tragedy; a symbol of faith, when there seemed little hope and no charity. Even the nonsense about the 'National Revolution' and the 'new order' which Vichy propaganda made so much of in 1940 and 1941 made some sense as an act of faith. Belief that France had a future as a nation was the repeated theme of his speeches and broadcasts.†

But meanwhile, across the English Channel, another French soldier had also committed himself to a momentous act of faith. A couple of days after Pétain took over from Paul Reynaud, General de Gaulle

* See Admiral Decoux: *A la barre de l'Indochine* (1940-1945).

† See the selection in *Quatre Années au Pouvoir* (1949) by Philippe Pétain.

took the first step which led to the formation of the Free French movement. For a time many Frenchmen persuaded themselves that the two actions were reconcilable : that if Pétain was the shield, General de Gaulle would be the sword, and even that there was an understanding between them. In 1947, Pétain maintained that in 1940 he had said : " There will be one leader abroad, and there will be one at home." In 1948 Lucien Galimand, a former Deputy and an officer of the Free French Forces, published his book with the arresting title, *Vive Pétain, Vive de Gaulle*. Having voted in favour of emergency powers for Pétain in July 1940, and having also served in the forces of armed resistance, he was well qualified to lament the clash between the two. Could this conflict have been avoided, or was it inherent in the contrasting decisions of 1940 ? Was it due to the intransigence of General de Gaulle and the Free French movement, as Mr. Sisley Huddleston suggests, or were those who clung to the " shield and the sword " theory doomed to disappointment from the start ? It is on answers to these questions that the historical verdict on Pétain will ultimately rest.

General de Gaulle's action in June 1940 was a revolutionary act. Because it was essential to repudiate the armistice in order to carry on the fight, it was also necessary to repudiate the French Government which had made it. When, a month later, that Government gained emergency powers, it was irresistible also to deny the legality and legitimacy of that Government. On the other hand, it was equally necessary for the men of Vichy to denounce General de Gaulle if they were to uphold the armistice. The method they chose, doubtless under German pressure, was to get a military court at Clermont-Ferrand to pass sentence of military degradation and death on Charles de Gaulle, for desertion in time of war and for acts of treason against the State. From then onwards, it was inevitably war to the knife between Free French and Vichy. Marshal Pétain later claimed that this was a mere " act of discipline ", to check an exodus of French officers abroad, and that the sentence was only one " of principle " never intended to be carried out.* For the same reason, it was equally necessary for General de Gaulle to have Pétain formally condemned and sentenced to death in 1945, though he promptly commuted the sentence to one of life imprisonment.

The Free French, being by self-selection the most intransigent

* See *Quatre Années au Pouvoir*, p. 21 ; in 1947, Pétain even claimed that his only objection was that General de Gaulle, as a subordinate officer, had gone abroad without seeking his permission, and that he would have given such permission had he been asked ! (*Les Événements survenus en France de 1933 à 1945 : Témoignages*, Tome I, p. 184). Certainly by 1942 he might well have been willing to play a ' double game '. It was claimed at his trial in 1945, and has not to my knowledge been denied, that when formally protesting to the United States *chargé d'affaires*, Mr. Tuck, against American landings on North Africa, he gave Mr. Tuck a little tap on the shoulder and slyly hummed a few bars of *La Marseillaise* ! (*Le Procès Pétain*, p. 376).

Frenchmen, and in no mood to resist temptations, developed a full-dress theory of Pétain's treachery and treason. It was embodied in such publications as the anonymous pamphlet called *Pétain-Laval: The Conspiracy*, published in 1942. Resting on such ambiguous and dubious evidence as Gustave Hervé's pamphlet of 1935, *C'est Pétain qu'il nous faut*, and of Anatole de Monzie's wartime diary *Ci-devant*, published in 1941, the argument was that the defeat of France, the formation of the Vichy Government and the overthrow of the Republic were all results of a deliberate and long-hatched plot. In this plot Laval was the chief conspirator but Pétain was the willing accomplice. This view, that all the disasters of 1940 had been consciously contrived by the men of Vichy in order to put themselves in power, remained the more or less official and generally accepted view of the Gaullist movement. Although it was so absurdly melodramatic, and ran counter to such obvious facts as the incalculability of events in 1940 and the orgy of hand-to-mouth measures and improvisation which was the most striking feature of the new Vichy régime, it was plausible enough to gain acceptance in the heat of wartime. It had the advantage of presenting Charles de Gaulle as the hero who had frustrated so dastardly a plot by raising the standard of revolt, and of condemning from the start the men of Vichy. It omits the awkward facts that Reynaud might not have recommended Pétain as his successor, that President Lebrun might have rejected him anyhow, and that the 'Popular Front' Assembly might likewise have refused to ratify the armistice or to confer the necessary emergency powers. It also overlooks the fact that Laval held no ministerial post until after the armistice was signed. It presupposes that Germany could be foreseen to be willing to enter into so odd an arrangement as the armistice terms which made Vichy possible. It credits the conspirators with a superhuman foresight and control over events, and requires a degree of accommodating pliability and predictability on the part of all those who held power that is beyond belief. But it served its purpose, and is the main source of the anti-Pétainist legend.*

By 1945, then, two contrary myths about Pétain dominated France. According to one, he was the 'Victor of Verdun' who added martyrdom to his heroism by standing as a shield between crippled France and her rapacious conqueror. According to the other, he was either a semi-fascist reactionary whose ambition and hatred of democracy made him a ready accomplice of the enemies of the Republic and even a conscious traitor to his country, or at best a senile defeatist whose vanity put him at the mercy of more crafty adventurers, bent on using him as a mask for their own power. A

* There is, of course, a corresponding 'plot' theory about the General, similarly crediting him with superhuman foresight: its fullest exposition is in Henri de Kerillis: *L'Accuse de Gaulle* (1946).

book such as Mr. Huddleston's does something to destroy the second of these myths. But it goes too far in its efforts to vindicate everything Pétain did and to shift blame for most of the ills of modern France on to the shoulders of either the pre-war parliamentary leaders on the one hand, or the post-war governments of General de Gaulle and the Fourth Republic on the other.

The most important facts about Pétain in 1940 were that he was 84, and that he was a professional soldier. Having to deal with a supreme political crisis at that age, he was almost completely at the mercy of those politicians whom he felt he could most rely upon to perform the task which he regarded it as his national duty to perform: that is, to rally the country in the moment of defeat and to make the best terms he could with the enemy. Thereafter, having made the momentous decision to stay in France and to make the armistice work, he found himself edged and pushed into endorsing a whole series of measures many of which he disliked and most of which he probably did not understand. He seems to have enjoyed moments of lively lucidity, when his native shrewdness and soldierly qualities exerted some influence on events. But the courtiers intrigued busily around him, jostling jealously for position, and he was only too often bewildered by palace manoeuvres. Mr. Huddleston records that in 1943, after a long talk with him during the morning, Pétain failed even to recognize him shortly after lunch. There is something pathetic and misguided in trying to decide whether such an old man, evidently in his dotage, was a patriot or a traitor. The report of the parliamentary commission of inquiry recently published, which includes a verbatim account of the 'evidence' taken from Pétain on the Ile d'Yeu in July 1947 still further strengthens this feeling. The answers are the barely coherent replies of a very weary and fuddled old man, who remembers chiefly that it was 'his war' in 1914-1918, and expresses surprise at hearing of some of the deeds at Vichy for which he was allegedly responsible, whilst admitting often enough that he was simply wrong in his judgments and his decisions.*

That Pétain, between the two wars, was too old-fashioned in his ideas to appreciate the revolution in warfare brought about by mechanization and aircraft; that he was by temperament over-cautious and pessimistic, even to the point of defeatism; that he was politically naïve and had a bias towards the authoritarianism often found in French service chiefs—all these facts can be admitted. But they do not total to a charge of treason, and they carry a certain censure on governments which were content to rely on the advice and services of such a man even more than a condemnation of the

* *Les Événements survenus en France de 1933 à 1945: Témoignages et documents*, Tome I, pp. 167-186. The full text of the trial of Pétain in 1945 is only slightly less pathetic—see *Procès du Maréchal Pétain: Compte rendu in extenso des audiences transmis par le Secrétariat général de la Haute Cour de Justice* (1945).

man himself. But by the same token, they do not entitle him to the fervent adulation and hero worship which his devotees bestow upon him. Is it not nearer the truth to see him as a rather faint-hearted and enfeebled old man, with a sense of public spirit and service strong enough to make him willing to shoulder responsibilities beyond his powers and his comprehension?

Myths are often more effectively created by their opponents than by their supporters. A firm policy of reconciliation and a truce to recriminations after 1944, had such been politically feasible, would have been the only sure way to kill the *mystique* of Pétainism. But General de Gaulle had to outbid the Communists in demands for *épuration*, and Pétainism thrived on semi-martyrdom. The scandalously mismanaged trials of Pétain and Laval were the breeding ground of the myth, and the prisoner on the Ile d'Yeu, however gently he was in fact treated, became the symbol of thousands of other victims of the purge. Amnesty can now dispel the myth as a force in French politics only if it happens to coincide with a period of improvement in social and economic conditions and a consequent recession of Communism in France.

French political life tends to be hag-ridden by the past. Read any issue of the weekly *Aspects de la France*, which is devoted to the revival of all that the *Action française* stood for and is now clamouring for revision of the trials of Pétain and Maurras, and it is at once apparent how little the past ever dies in France. It was a real sign of hope that the main resistance movements, during the war, looked so much to the future. The curse of recriminations during and after liberation was that they turned the eyes even of resistance towards the past. And the curse of Pétainism to-day is that it would perpetuate this obsession with history to the neglect of pressing contemporary issues. It may be that Pétain was not, in this sense, a Pétainist. But before the *mystique* becomes completely detached from the person, it is important to explode both the Vichy and the Gaullist myths of Pétain, and to see him neither as hero nor as traitor, but as a distinguished public servant who, through human weaknesses, dotage and political simplicity, helped to divide the country which he no doubt hoped to serve.

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NATIONALISM & THE GERMAN HISTORICAL TRADITION

BY MARTIN BRAUN

ON the eve of far-reaching decisions about the future relationship between the west and the German Federal Republic, it seems natural to cast the mind back for a moment to the situation immediately after the German capitulation in 1945. Then many a German was bold enough to assume that the downfall of the Hitler régime would automatically lead to the re-admission of the German people into the community of nations. This did not happen, because it could not. The optimistic Germans blinded themselves to the crucial fact that Hitler had merely brought to its logical conclusion the mentality of isolationism of which the beginnings can be traced back to the era of Bismarck. Viewing the whole process in retrospect, the historian can hardly fail to observe that Germany's constant nightmare of being "encircled" by hostile and jealous powers was basically a kind of wish-fulfilment—a projection of Germany's own defiant separatism on to the world around her. In this attitude of national egocentricity, which degenerated into self-idolatry, Germany achieved a nationalism all her own and quite distinct from any other European nationalism.

There is a rather amusing passage in Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, where this ardent apostle of German superiority disputes the German right to the title "nation of thinkers". The Germans, he argues, might be a nation of soldiers and merchants and of scholars and artists but thinkers are scarce amongst them. Now Chamberlain was no doubt a crank obsessed with the idea of a German-Aryan world mission, but he was by no means a fool. His refusal to acknowledge the Germans as a "nation of thinkers" results from his identification of thought with analytical thought, which quite possibly is not developed in the German cultural tradition and character. However this may be, Germany can certainly—at least since the days of Herder—claim to be the country of thinkers who speculate on the meaning of the historical process. Chamberlain's own life bears this out. The son of an English admiral, he settled down in Germany, giving up natural science in favour of philosophy and history. He became an historical thinker, and his *magnum opus*, perhaps the greatest best-seller of its kind before Spengler and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, was an achievement typical of the

German cultural and emotional environment.

Chamberlain's name conjures up at once a host of poets and writers whose combined efforts over several generations turned Germany into a hothouse of historical speculation and dreams of a millennial *Reich*. Spengler, together with Moeller van den Bruck (*The Third Reich*), A. Rosenberg (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*), and E. Juenger (*The Worker*), formed the spearhead of German nationalism in its most virulent phase. It would be tedious to catalogue all who left their mark on national consciousness, though three at least must be named, Fichte, Hegel, and Nietzsche. It is far more important to gain an adequate idea of this legacy as a whole, a legacy of thinking in historical concepts or in terms of a national mythology. To create it, a great variety of types has been at work—the poet-professor (Schiller, Uhland, Arndt, Hoffmann von Fallersleben), the professor who wrote one “inspiring” novel after the other, all of them concerned with the glory of ancient *Germanentum* (Felix Dahn), the dramatist who dabbled in an intensely patriotic journalism (Kleist), the composer who at the same time wielded his pen for a national ideal (Richard Wagner), the novelist making propaganda for German *Lebensraum* (Hans Grimm), the poet pure and proper (Hoelderlin, Stefan George), the orientalist who advocated a de-orientalized Christianity and the struggle against Judaism (Paul de Lagarde *alias* Boetticher), the ex-general who as a publicist had a special axe to grind (Bernhardi, Ludendorff, Haushofer), the specialist of *Germanistik*, pre-history, anthropology and folk-lore, and finally, but not least, the professional historian who during the nineteenth century emerged as a leading figure in the political and national movements of the German middle classes. In Germany more than anywhere else we encounter the phenomenon of “history as character-maker”, *Geschichte als Bildungsmacht*, to use the significant title of a little book by the German historian Gerhard Ritter. Indeed, in Germany, history or—more precisely—national myth in the garb of history, moulded the general outlook to an extent difficult to imagine in a country where men like Kipling and Seeley represent the high-water marks of the imperialist mentality.

German historiography has outstanding achievements to its credit. It is enough to point to the greatest European historian since Gibbon, Leopold von Ranke, whose dispassionate and universal outlook remained a steady influence on successive generations of German historians. Yet it was not Ranke, but his critic and opponent Treitschke, who with his militantly nationalistic rhetoric evoked a tremendous response in the hearts of the young, and reached vast sections of the middle classes outside the university. And it was Treitschke, also, who after his death continued to exert the most enduring influence on German public opinion. His glorification of

war and naked force, his apotheosis of the "Power State", his scorn of moral principles in international relations, his tirades against nations he feared or despised, his anti-Semitism, all make him a forerunner of the Nazis. But it is a measure of the deterioration of the cultural atmosphere in Germany that, when compared with men like Spengler or Rosenberg—let alone with anti-Semitic writers of the vulgar type—Treitschke still gives the impression of humanity and liberal-mindedness.

Closely allied to the attitude of white-hot nationalism was another trend which, though not confined to Germany, reached there its fullest momentum: the trend towards specialization in scholarship and science. The German specialist became a ready tool in the hands of the State, an easy prey to any ideology which appealed to his dreams of power. On the other hand, it should be recognized that some specialists deserve sympathy rather than contempt. For specialization was, apart from emigration, the only solution for any political non-conformist who, by tackling issues and subjects of crucial importance, would have involved himself in conflict with State authority; a sense of political frustration induced specialization. There is no more instructive case of an intellectual giant who, embittered by the anti-liberal turn of events in Germany, was driven into the *ersatz* activity of specialization than that of Theodor Mommsen, whose testament contains the most moving political confession ever written by a German scholar. If Mommsen chose to leave his *History of Rome* incomplete, rather than write in the atmosphere of the Second Empire the sections dealing with Augustus and his successors, it does not require much imagination to visualize the difficulties of those historians who had to cope with subjects of immediate political relevance. Professor Trevelyan's dictum: "True history can only do good. . . . It is false history, distorted by propagandists, that makes fanaticism and war," reflects the existence in England of a politically neutral field of inquiry; it makes little allowance for the predicament of even the best-intentioned historian who has to work in an entirely different environment, exposed to external pressure and steeped in an ideology that obscures the borderline between falsehood and truth.

Another factor is that where, as in Germany, the prevailing influence was a combination of national egocentricity and intense specialization, a brand of historiography could not emerge of sufficient breadth and sympathy to strike a common chord in men of other nations. Actually, one has to go back to Ranke, who essentially belongs to the era of Metternich, to find a German historian with so world-wide an appeal as, for instance, Renan, Taine, Burckhardt, Pirenne, Huizinga and Toynbee. There is, of course, one exception—Spengler. But his popularity was strictly "seasonal", and he

became an international best-seller despite his German peculiarities, while with a Pirenne or Huizinga their Belgian or Dutch background operates as an asset rather than a handicap in conveying a historical picture of universal validity and appeal.

The question poses itself: what lies behind this national egocentricity and excessive pre-occupation with history, so characteristic of Germany since the second half of the last century? The answer can hardly be in doubt: it is the secularization of *Weltanschauung*, with history more and more filling the gap left by religion. As the word *Deutschland* became over-charged with displaced religious emotion, so countless Germans exhibited an attitude of almost mystical devotion to their historic destiny, a destiny they envisaged as a force making for cleavage and separation. In this respect German nationalism differs from other varieties of this European movement. When we glance at such representative thinkers as Mazzini, Dostoevsky or Mickiewicz, we find that for them nationalism and the Christian tradition coalesce into creeds in which national and universal aspirations are most impressively blended. For it was the aim of these prophets of Italy, Russia and Poland to give a universal meaning to the historic rôle of their nations within the Christian scheme of things, while German nationalism, being fundamentally isolationist, displayed either hostility or indifference towards the Christian heritage of Europe. Even an eighteenth-century cosmopolitan like Herder could ask himself whether Germany had not paid too high a price for Christianity in forfeiting genuine nationality. A few generations later many Germans were sufficiently paganized to look upon the 4,500 Saxons executed by Charlemagne in Verden as martyrs sacrificed on the altar of an alien religion. German nationalism ran its full course by ending up with Rosenberg's "myth", with *Deutschreligion*, with the project of a radically de-Christianized "German Church", in short, with open apostasy. But apostasy—Professor Toynbee reminds us—"is not just a repudiation of a once accepted faith—a rejection of democracy or Christianity or whatever the apostate's previous faith may have been. Apostasy is a relapse from a later and higher faith to some earlier and lower one; and the earlier and lower religion into which the apostates of our time have fallen back is the immemorially old pagan worship of Juggernaut—the idolization of collective human power." This means, in our context, the idolization of Germany as a nation and, in more recent times, as the core of the "Aryan" race.

If, in German self-idolatry, the nation becomes god, its history is the unique process by which the deity reveals itself. This self-revelation occurs above all in the appearance of great men, heroes like some of the medieval emperors, Luther, Frederick the Great, Bismarck, and—for millions of Germans not so long ago—Hitler. But unlike the

heroes of other nations, such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, these figures do not represent universal humanitarian ideals ; instead, they stand exclusively for national virtues, values and aspirations. The status of German heroes like Frederick and Bismarck is or was very similar to that of demigods, with the historian as priest and the rest as ordinary worshippers. The intensification of this hero-worship* into a national mysticism may explain why the Nazis, even in the turmoil of war, took good care to protect the coffins of Frederick and Hindenburg from damage and from the risk of falling into Russian hands, as though they were the palladium of the *Reich*. There is a revealing entry in Goebbels' diaries, written at the height of the war (May 12, 1943). "The Fuehrer"—it runs—"characterized it as nothing short of absurd that Frederick the Great . . . was buried under the cupola of the Potsdam Garrison Church, although he wished to be interred beside his dogs in the park of Sans Souci. Thank God, English air raids have compelled us to end this condition. The coffin of Frederick the Great has been placed where it is safe from bombs. The Fuehrer will never restore it to the Potsdam Garrison Church." Goebbels then meditates on plans for the future. Should a mausoleum in Greek style be built for the king in the park of Sans Souci ? Or should he be laid to rest in the great Soldiers' Hall of the new War Ministry ? And he concludes his musings thus : "Personally, I should prefer to see the wish of the great king fulfilled and him given his last resting place in Sans Souci. The Fuehrer, too, rather inclines to this view. But these are problems for the future." These are problems only for a twisted mind which raises the unimportant question of the burial place of a Prussian king on to the plane of myth and ritual. And is not the rivalry between the Nazis and the historians of the Prussian school as to the rightful ownership of the "Fridericus" tradition a reminder that in such a controversy emotional and semi-religious values are at stake ? But Nazis and Prussian historians were in complete agreement on one point, that it was sacrilege to doubt the superhuman greatness of these figures. And so intense is the self-identification of some of the German historians with these national heroes that even to-day they fear that their own prestige would be undermined if a sort of Gotterdammerung were to overtake the German pantheon. The whole complex is, of course, without analogy in English historiography.

Considering the obvious link between the rise of the pseudo-religion of national self-deification and the progressive disintegration

* The hero-mystique is well illustrated by an episode related in the reminiscences of Dr. Paul Schmidt in *Hitler's Interpreter* (1951, p. 207) : "Hitler complained bitterly about Pétain, who had declined his invitation to attend the interment of the remains of the Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon's son. Hitler, as a big gesture, had had these brought from Vienna to Paris."

f Christian belief in Germany, it will not appear surprising that it was the Catholic regions of Germany, with their basically intact pattern of religious life, which were in the long run least affected by the Nazi postasy. This remains true, notwithstanding the fact that Bavaria was the cradle of the Nazi movement, and both Hitler and Goebbels were men of Catholic family background. (In this connection it may be worth recalling that even in pre-Nazi days the only German historian who had the inner resources to oppose the Treitschkean picture of German history by producing a masterpiece written in the spirit of European cultural solidarity was a devout Catholic, Franz Schnabel.) The ideological challenge of Naziism could only be met by those who were able to take their stand on universal principles and supra-national convictions, whether Catholic, Protestant or humanitarian. Each of these creeds had its martyrs, some of them world-famous like Pastor Niemöller, but most of them simple working-class people who suffered and died for their ideal of a just social order. True, these forces have never been capable of asserting themselves decisively, and nationalism is still the most potent undercurrent in German politics. Nevertheless, they constitute the only hope for a spiritual as well as a political return of Germany into the family of nations.

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PERSIA'S NEED FOR LAND REFORM

BY P. H. T. BECKETT

THE great part of Persia is sheltered by the ring of the Zagros and Elburz mountains and their extensions southwards and eastwards from the rain-bearing winds from the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, which drop most of the moisture they carry as they rise over the crests. So that in central Persia the factor limiting agriculture and human settlement is water supply. The soil is generally fertile, and there is space enough and to spare, only the water is lacking. In England village settlements have as often as not grown up where a rise in the land placed their sites above the level of floods, or where the narrowing of a valley permitted a bridge to be built across an unfordable river. In either case the sites have been chosen to avoid the handicap of too much water. Over most of Persia the rainfall is too low for crops to be grown without irrigation, so settlements grow up wherever there is available water, and there can hardly be too much.

Only in the mountains is the rainfall sufficient, and settlement is limited here by the rigours of the winter months, and the intermittent lawlessness of the tribesmen. The nomads have themselves learned to avoid extremes of weather by migrating every winter to lower lands, but have often imposed hard terms upon the settled peoples in what they consider to be tribal territory. The greater part of the settled cultivators live on the central plateau, and in the few great intermontane basins, wherever the rainfall over a wide area of mountain or hillside is canalized by run-off and percolation on to a small area of plain at the mountain's foot.

Here on the limit of the eroded material washed down by the spring torrents, where the finer material is deposited as rich soil, the villages grow up. There is no average village, the size being determined only by the yield of the well or spring, and populations vary from say ten families in the small clusters of houses in the mountain valleys, of which all the able-bodied will be shepherds, to over 400 families in the large villages on the plain, of whom perhaps half or less will be peasants, a few will be craftsmen and gendarmes, landowners or schoolmasters, and the rest casual labourers and carpet weavers. The density of the villages depends entirely on the quality of the aquifer, the water-bearing strata below. Where the flow of ground

water is free, then there will be a nearly continuous belt of cultivated land along the edge of the foothills, with small satellite villages gathered round larger, where a bazaar or mosque provides a focus.

Village lands are owned by the landlord, the *muja*, or more commonly by a number of landlords as the holdings are split by inheritance and amalgamated by marriage. The landowner may have acquired tenure by converting the desert to the 'sown', that is by enclosing and providing water for an area previously uncultivated, or he will be descended from the first holder. It is uncommon for peasants to own their land as independent farmers. This is, I suppose, because if a peasant had sufficient capital to tide him over the inevitable bad year that reduces his fellows to borrowing at interest, then he would probably multiply his holdings from his increase in the good years and would not remain a peasant.

The peasant individually is generally a simple, courteous soul, helpful to the traveller and the stranger, and well able to endure hardships. As for many simple people, the qualities of a crowd are considerably less than the sum of the qualities of the individuals composing it, and the kindly passer-by one day who stops to help change a wheel may stop to jeer on the next occasion when he passes in a crowd. All the peasant asks from governments and landowners is to be left alone to rear his family, and to reap a crop where he has sown, and to achieve this he has put up with a great deal of oppression. It is this endurance of the Persian peasant that has maintained some sort of stability in the land through the ages, as one invasion has followed another and successive ruling classes have been massacred and displaced.

The water that gives life to the village may come directly from a well, where there is a good flow in the aquifer, and it is near the surface. In the arid south where the annual rainfall is concentrated in a short period, and most of it runs off the bare hills without percolating down to replenish the ground water, the winter torrents may be led into reservoirs. But generally, and nearly universally in the central plateau which is the heart of Persia—in a way even more so than Azerbaijan, the most thickly populated province, because it is more independent of Russian influence—the water is derived from *qanát*.

The aquifer beneath the areas of good soil is generally deep as the ground water percolates from the foothill gullies into the porous rock strata that makes the plain. The rainfall over a wide area of mountain will eventually find its way down to the plain through quite a small area of foothill, and this canalization enables cultivation to take place; but coming as it does from catchment areas at widely varying distances from the plain the water flow will be spread out over the whole year, so that at any one time the head of ground water

will be low, and the rate of flow small. So a well is dug as close to the foothills as possible to strike the water table where it is near to the surface. Then from the foot of the shaft a horizontal or slightly sloping tunnel is dug, so that it meets the land surface at the uphill end of the village lands and the water flows out over the fields.

By this means the aquifer is tapped where the flow is most concentrated, and by extending the tunnel back the water-yielding surface is very much greater—perhaps a hundred or a thousand fold—than that of a single well shaft. The underground conduit will suffer very little loss by evaporation. Such *qanáts* play a vital part in agriculture and settlement generally, and in the drier areas may commonly be up to 20 miles long and 300 feet deep where they tap the water table, with examples known of a tunnel 70 miles long, and a shaft 1,000 feet deep—all excavated by men with picks, and by the light of primitive oil lamps.

Clearly the capital required to build, or even to maintain such *qanáts*, which one cynic has adduced as one of the only two original ideas that have come from Persia, is much greater than any peasant can afford, and the peasants have so far shown themselves unable to work together in co-operative schemes, so the money must be put up by the *muja*, the local capitalist. He may build a *qanát* as a speculative investment, or he may inherit it. Generally speaking the ownership of land and water go together.

A *muja* may manage his land in one of three ways. He may farm it himself, paying casual labourers to do the work about 25 rials a day, where a kilogram of rice costs 18 rials ; or he may let it on a four-year lease to a farmer with some capital, who will try and rent a number of holdings to achieve a sizeable total, which he will work with hired labour ; or he may share-crop it. In the last case, which is the most common, the peasants draw lots each year for which plot of land each group of three or four will cultivate. The *muja* orders which crops shall be grown, and provides seed and water. He may provide draught animals. Then after the harvest he takes back 65-80 per cent. of the yield, depending on the crop, the mulct being larger in the more arid and remote provinces. From this he will provide seed for the following year, and will pay taxes of roughly 10-15 per cent. of the total crop. If as is likely the *muja* owns the water that drives the mill, then he will acquire a further share in the harvest as the price for grinding his peasants' corn. The net profit from all this, after the cost of maintaining the *qanáts* has been deducted, is by common admission in South Persia about 30 per cent. of the total crop.

The first two systems appear to work efficiently enough, though they are hard on the labourer whose wages are low. He may be laid off during the winter when there is no cultivation to be done, but when

his need is greatest, since the villagers are living on stored food and cannot give so open-handedly to the unemployed as during the summer. The last and most common system has worked all right through the ages, but it shows all the disadvantages of share-cropping at its worst. Excepting for the peasants of the owner of only a small holding, the chance of a peasant drawing the same plot in successive years is so small that no one makes any attempt to improve the land by extra cultivation or weeding; "What is the use," one peasant said, "of planting shade trees? Only the *Muja* will benefit!" When the share of the peasant is so small that he has little inducement to farm well—even if he were to produce a third as much again extra as a result of hard work, the increase in his share will only be one-twelfth which, when translated into pounds and ounces, is too small to make the effort worth while, and this although most of the peasants are living very little above subsistence level.

However, with what appear to us to be its inequalities, this system has worked reasonably well for several hundreds of years, and the peasants have gone on working under whoever owned the land, native or invader. The balance of interests has somehow been maintained. The landlord has according to his lights looked after his peasants, and as far as possible has protected them from molestation. By maintaining the land and water he has provided security of tenure for the cultivators. On their side of this implicit bargain the peasants have worked hard for small return, and by their labours have supported a large landowning class, and paid for an army and a civil service, and generally buffered the State against catastrophes.

But the balance, always delicate, is now in jeopardy if not already lost. Some of the landowners, enough to be significant, are not carrying out their side of the bargain. There are too many absentee landlords, employing agents to collect their rents, since every Persian who can read wishes to get to Tehran, and once there to stay there. Then as a result of the insecurity caused by the war, and a feeling of not knowing what is coming next, many *qanât* owners are failing to maintain the tunnels, in order to send the money saved abroad as insurance against the crash that they fear, so that the flow of water is decreasing. Add to this a number of years of low rainfall, at any rate in the south, and the fact that the growing population has scrubbed up much of the desert vegetation for fuel so that the sand is beginning to blow over the cultivated lands, and we have land going out of cultivation and the security of tenure of the peasant threatened.

In fact the proportion of the village populations that is now landless is becoming alarming; in the worst areas perhaps up to half the able-bodied men have no land and no permanent employment, and the market for the crafts to which they might turn is diminishing. This is too high a number for the destitute to be helped over a bad period

by their relations, and the bad period shows signs of being too long, so that in many of the villages there is despair. The people have been living too near to the subsistence level for too long to have any reserves upon which to fall back. And the carpet industry is failing as a result of currency restrictions and trade quotas, and is unable to absorb this mass of cheap labour as it has in the past.

All this has happened before—many times—but there is a new factor in the situation. The wind of liberal ideas has blown through Persia from the west, so that even the illiterate peasant is just beginning to ask why his share of the fruits of his labours is so small. A different wind is blowing from the north, offering an administration that is not corrupt and expropriation of the landowners. In previous periods a time of chaos has been followed by the rule of a strong Shah who has by vigorous action restored confidence and restarted the investment of money in the maintenance of the fields. But the new ideas are too strong, and the old balance cannot be restored. Unless a new balance between owner and peasant can be found, and that soon, the inter-related effects of insecurity and unemployment will extend until the State breaks down. The Shah has attempted to give a lead by handing crown lands over to his peasants, but there is no sign this lead has been followed, and probably the only result has been to reduce the resources with which the crown might take over the administration should the occasion demand.

In conclusion it is perhaps alarming to note that in the two Asian countries most directly threatened by Russia—South Korea and Persia—the landlords' shares of the crops are 80 per cent.* and 70 per cent. respectively, compared with 50 per cent. in Kuomintang China, and 37 per cent. under the new régime.†

(Some months ago the author led a scientific expedition in Persia to study water, soil, flora and fauna and to make museum collections.)

* Quoting John Gunther.

† Quoting the *Economist*, June 1951.

WHAT ARE UNIVERSITIES FOR ?

BY J. F. WOLFENDEN

IN asking this question it is not suggested that the answer shall be dictated from outside the universities. Still less is it suggested that the answer should be given, or any policy which might flow from the answer be imposed, by "the State". We have seen in other countries the consequences of the use of the universities as instruments of party doctrine, and we do not want that here. The whole tradition of the British universities is against their serving any such end, and it is clear that no responsible person intends to use them for it. Indeed, the admirably non-interventionist principles and practice of the University Grants Committee are an almost incredible example of the spending of public money with the deliberate minimum of Treasury intervention and control. At the same time, nobody should forget that it is public money, to the tune of some £20,000,000 a year. And although that sum may be trifling in comparison with other expenditure of a less obviously productive kind, it is big enough to deserve and demand justification in its spending. In short, if the universities themselves do not find some answer to the question, it could happen that one day before long somebody else might answer it for them—and not necessarily in a way they would like.

Secondly, it is not suggested that any answer which the universities might give—and it is their business to give one—would universally apply to every teacher or every student in every university. An answer which was universally applicable would probably be the wrong one, if it implied a policy of uniformity. Each university in Britain has its own particular interests, over and above the provision made by all of them in the fields of teaching and research generally recognized and accepted as appropriate to them all. One shows a special interest in ancient philosophy, another in atomic physics, a third in agriculture, a fourth in metallurgy. So uniformity would be uncongenial, and inappropriate; it would in fact destroy one of the delights of university development, the right of each institution to follow its own line of interest. But short of a deadening uniformity or an artificially imposed system, there are certain ideals, practices, objectives and principles which all universities, *qua* universities, have in common; and they owe it both to themselves and to society that

they should state plainly and with as much agreement as they can command what it is that they believe to be the purpose of their existence in the middle of the twentieth century.

In what follows the duties of a university in connection with research and original work are omitted, not, indeed, because they are not important but because the immediate practical problem is on the teaching side of a university's life. Original work, of all kinds and in all fields, remains one of the two prime duties of any establishment for higher education. In real life the problem usually hits the universities from the bitterly practical point of view of selection of students for admission. The number of students admitted is at present about 24,000 a year. The number of applications is something like five times that figure. The number of applicants is quite unknown, for nobody knows how many applications, at different universities, each applicant makes. Each university knows, to its pain and grief, that it has to cope with four or five times as many applications as it has vacancies available in any one year. It applies, for its own purposes, its own selection procedure, and it reaches something like satisfaction, with transient irritations caused by the last-minute withdrawals of candidates who have obtained places elsewhere. It never knows whether or not those candidates whom it rejected would have been more successful than those whom it accepted ; it does know that it has a casualty-rate, among those whom it did accept, which represents a substantial waste of teaching-time and public money. It constantly tries to improve its selection procedure, by attempting to interview more and more of its applicants or by raising higher and higher its faculty requirements, or by relying more and more (or, it may be, less and less) on the recommendations of headmasters and headmistresses.

But behind all this devoted labour in the rooms of registrars and deans of faculties there is a growing uneasiness. The actual machinery is, without much doubt, improving all the time. But more and more the feeling grows that nobody quite knows what purpose this improving machinery is supposed to be serving. The machinery is becoming more efficient as a means to an end. The trouble is that the end which it is intended to serve is obscure inadequately defined, and, to the extent to which it is defined, incomplete.

On a short and restricted view a tolerably satisfactory answer can be given. The university official charged with selection for a particular faculty, the dean, the registrar, the admissions secretary, or whoever he may be, can ask himself the simple question : " Which of these hundreds of applicants for these comparatively few vacancies seem, from their stated qualifications and records, the most likely to obtain degrees in the subjects they propose to study ? " It is

fairly easy to rule out those who by the age of 18 cannot show, by success in examinations taken before that age, the standard of ability and attainment required for undertaking, with reasonable prospect of success, the course of study leading to a degree. Even at this stage there are dangers—the late developer, the difficulty a particular school may have had in providing adequate teaching in a particular subject, the precocious student who reaches his peak before he leaves school. There is further evidence to be taken into account, from school reports and interviews. The number of vacancies available is determined by a variety of factors, including laboratory accommodation, the popularity of a particular department, the casualty-rate in the intermediate examination. Battling his way through all these complications (and many more) the dean, after a great deal of work, does in the end produce his list of acceptances, on the basis that these persons, rather than the other applicants, have the best prospect of completing a degree course. It is easy to criticize both this sort of procedure and the criteria which lie behind it. But what else is a dean to do ? If there is to be any criticism it should be aimed not at him but at those on whose behalf he acts ; and it should be based not on the procedure of an executive officer but on the absence of an articulate and coherent answer to the fundamental question.

The problem of selection may be looked at from another, and perhaps a more illuminating, point of view. The procedure we have outlined—and, with local variants, it is pretty general throughout the modern universities—is founded on the assumption that the main function of the dean is to select, from among a large number of applicants, those persons who seem most likely to complete a degree course. It is time that this assumption was more closely and more critically examined.

For if it is uncritically accepted it has many consequences, not all of them intended. First, on the simply practical level, it sets the dean an almost impossible task. No amount of human endeavour can select out of the total number of applicants the one-fifth who will in the end be successful. The casualty-rate between arrival at the university and the final examination is high. Of those who begin a degree course and fall by the wayside a large proportion enter the university at public expense, and it may therefore be argued that if the obtaining of a degree is the purpose of university life the public money spent on these failures is wasted. Certainly it might be argued that the time of professors and lecturers could have been better employed. It may seem odd that with so many applicants to choose from the proportion of failures is so high, and it may seem that deans are very inefficient selectors. The truth rather is that success in the old higher certificate examination or at advanced level in the new general certificate of education is a very unreliable pointer

to success in university studies. The difference not only in standard but in the whole approach and method of university teaching is so great from that of any but an exceptional school that earlier examination results are often more misleading than helpful. Unless standards are to be reduced, or methods made more like those of school than they are already—and both these courses would be vigorously opposed by many university teachers on many grounds—the failures and the wastage will continue. There are those who believe that we are already ‘scraping the barrel’, that there are not in fact enough young men and women coming out of the schools each year qualified in mind and temperament to complete university degree courses, that so far from needing broader and more lavish public provision for intending students we have already gone too far, unless we are to envisage a substantial drop in the standard of a degree. We have as yet very little evidence about what happens to the applicants for places who are not accepted. It may be that some of them would have made a better showing at studies than some of those who were accepted ; the selection procedure lacks this ‘control group’. But there seems no antecedent reason to suppose that many of them would have been any better than their successful rivals. The trouble lies deeper and leads to the second main consequence of the fundamental assumption underlying this selection procedure.

Perhaps this can best be put in the form of a question. Are there 24,000 young men and women coming out of the schools each year who are fitted for higher education at university level ? More accurately, are there 24,000 who ought to be selected, on academic evidence, as suitable for studies leading to a degree ? If there are, then choosing them is simply a matter of selection technique. If there are not, what is to be done about it ? Enough has been said to suggest that there are not, that selection procedure is not so shatteringly bad as to lose any substantial number of properly equipped applicants, and that the casualty-rate suggests an excess of supply of university places over genuine demands.

Is it likely that there will be 24,000 a year, out of an annual age-group of about 600,000, who will deserve selection, on academic grounds, for places ? Does one person out of every 25 who are born qualify, on these criteria ? It seems, to put it mildly, improbable—unless current notions of the functions of the modern universities are considerably modified. The possible modifications are many. First, it might be suggested that the insistence on a nominally academic criterion for admission is inconsistent with the real nature and function of a university. What the dean does, to put it crudely, is to arrange his applicants in a list in order of alleged academic merit and then draw a horizontal line at the point where he has enough to fill his available vacancies. No dean in his senses would argue that

there was any measurable difference between the bottom candidate above the line and the top candidate below it. But he feels, since a university is—whatever else it may or may not be—an institution for higher education, that he must select in academic order of merit. Yet the university itself would be seriously misrepresented if it were regarded as no more than a place where people amass the information necessary to the satisfaction of examiners. The university authorities encourage the existence of a bewildering variety of clubs and societies which make no very obvious contribution to the acquiring of a degree, which, indeed, cultivated to excess, sometimes contribute to the opposite. In those universities which set store by corporate life, in colleges, halls of residence or hostels, much more is offered to the student than simply attendance at lectures. The extent to which other activities and other experiences are to be encouraged may vary from one place to another and from one tutor to another within the same university. But, to put it as mildly as possible, there would be few university teachers who would positively assert that the sole and sufficient reason for spending three or four years at a university was to get a degree. And yet it is on this basis that deans conduct their admissions procedure. Worse, it is on this basis that the young themselves have come to assess the purpose and value of their university careers. They genuinely believe that the State or the L.E.A. (or, less frequently, their father) has sent them to the university “to get a degree”. Not, mark you, “to follow the course of study leading to a degree”; still less “to live in a university, with all that that implies in education and maturity of mind and character.” There is a well-known story of a parent whose daughter fell seriously ill in the summer of her last year and was therefore unable to take her final degree examination. “Oh dear,” he wailed (or words to that effect), “three years wasted.” But if he was wrong the universities themselves are not wholly blameless, for both by their admissions procedure and by their failure to give a more positive account of their own function, they have led thousands of people to think that he was right. Many university teachers deplore the ‘utilitarian’ or ‘chrematistic’ attitude of their pupils to-day. “They come here to get a ticket, to collect the piece of paper that will get them a job.” And if they do, whose fault is it? The fault of their schoolmasters and schoolmistresses? But they are the product of the universities. The fault of their prospective employers? But if they were not university graduates themselves they have presumably, in this respect at least, taken their standards from the universities. The fault of their parents? If so, then all the more urgent is the need for the universities to make their own position clear. Nobody would deny that there is an element of the ‘vocational’ in a university education, and nobody would regret that the young man who in

former days went to a university 'to have a good time' for three or four years is an obsolete phenomenon. But there is a great gulf between that and the ticket-hunting of to-day. One thing is quite clear : whoever is to blame for the present attitude it is not the present generation of students. They have been brought up in this atmosphere ; they genuinely believe that sums of public money have been invested in them for this purpose, and most of them conscientiously try to make a proper return for this investment. Is that the right frame of mind for making the most of the opportunities which a university affords ?

Of course the academic criterion must be an important one. It would be wrong to waste public money and professorial time on those who were intellectually incompetent. But unless it can be demonstrated that there are 24,000 young people each year who are destined for an academic future we deceive ourselves and mislead them if we base the whole of our university procedure on the assumption that the academic is the one and only relevant criterion. Ought not we rather to say, quite plainly and openly, that the university has other functions in addition to serving as the place from which recruits to the learned professions will annually go out to their first job ? That it must always be, but need it be that and no more ? There are several thousands of young men and women each year who will in the course of time come to positions of responsibility in a wide variety of careers other than the academic. In plain fact they are academically indistinguishable from many of the present inhabitants of universities, though they may have lacked one required 'advanced level pass' in the general certificate of education. Yet at present this lack may deprive them of the university place which is filled instead by a worthy but undistinguished competitor. Obviously the first-class brains of the country must be given the best possible education appropriate to their particular abilities, whether it be in a university or in a college of higher technology. But when all the first-class academic brains have been catered for there will still be a great many university places unfilled. We should be doing a greater service to the community at large if we admitted to those places the young people who are going to be the leaders in agriculture, commerce, the press, industry, radio, politics and local government than if we reserve the places for some of those who fill them to-day. They would suffer no more casualties on the way to a degree than does the present population, and their final degree classes would be no lower. Much more important, we should be fulfilling our obligation to the nation on a much wider front than we do at the moment, for university habits of thought and living would spread themselves to many places where they are at present unknown. There would be no 'fall in academic standards' ; the comparatively few who set the pace, the

first-class brains, would be there just as they are now. Still less would there be any increase of 'vocational training'; in simple fact there is a great deal of that now, unnoticed because the range of vocations concerned is narrow, traditional and respectable. The only differences, from the academic point of view, would be that different people would occupy the lower reaches of the second class and that the circle of 'producing teachers to produce teachers' would be broken—to the advantage of all concerned.

In short, the newer universities must begin to face the wider responsibilities to the nation at large which the older universities used to perform almost by accident. Another way of expressing the same point is to say that the range of jobs for which a university career is regarded as a valuable preliminary must be greatly widened. It is no objection to murmur 'American' in tones of horror or contempt. Our modern universities are by now robust enough to face this new obligation without falling into the traps which the experience of their American counterparts has demonstrated. And there is no harm in learning a lesson or two from overseas.

Some such re-orientation as this is essential if the newer universities are going to fulfil their function in the twentieth century. So far they have tried, with considerable success, to provide an academic haven in places which the older universities left untouched. The time has come for an extensive re-thinking and an explicit re-statement of their place in the national life.

(The author is the Vice-Chancellor of Reading University.)

THE ACADEMIC AMATEUR

BY M. F. LLOYD PRICHARD

THE Registrar of Oxford University describes and pays tribute to the system whereby in the older universities, academic amateurs assume responsibility for university administration. He notes that until fairly recent times administration in the universities was a fairly simple business and illustrates his point with the fact that "thirty years ago there was still living in Oxford an old lady who as a girl had helped her uncle, then vice-chancellor, to keep the university accounts." But he goes on to invite us to support his claim that even with a vast increase in the complexity and size of university business, there is still a case to be made for the academic amateur.*

* * * *

There is little doubt that, in the main, with the multitudinous administrative, academic and clerical duties, performed by academic staff in every university department, the academic amateur deals wisely and efficiently, doing work that no trained professional could do so well. For in this sphere the scholar in control is safer and more dependable, since his function is to ensure—and quite rightly—"the predominance of academic views in the conduct of university business."

At the same time, however, where this particular concern is not at stake and where it is of greater importance to make sure that the conduct of university business is equal in efficiency to any other kind of business, it can be strongly argued that the case for the academic amateur is weak and that the argument for the trained professional personnel is sounder. This statement is particularly true in relation to the office of steward or junior bursar, an office which in most men's or women's colleges is filled by a Fellow of the college (who nowadays may be primarily a scientist or classical scholar or mathematician) since the assumption is still made (but with little justification) that in this sphere too, the academic amateur is the best fitted to take control.

The nature of the office can be well understood from the account of it given in the life of Sir Michael Sadler written by his son. Michael

* "University Administration" by Douglas Veale. THE FORTNIGHTLY, November 1951.

Sadler went up to Trinity College, Oxford, with a classical scholarship and exhibition. By 1884 he achieved a double first. He then began a search for work. He wished to marry and he wanted to live in Oxford. In 1885 he was appointed to the secretaryship of University Extension and in 1886 he was appointed steward of Christ Church, retaining the secretaryship but giving up any other recurrent educational work which might conflict with the rules.

These rules, as published in the leaflet issued by the Governing Body of Christ Church, were as follows :

The Steward performs the duties usually consigned in other Colleges to the Junior Bursar.

He has the general management and control of the domestic arrangements of the House, including the rooms, hall, kitchen, buttery, office, coal yards, quadrangles and general establishment, and of the servants employed in the various departments, about 90 in number.

There are 196 sets of rooms, to which breakfast, luncheon, etc., are served from the kitchen, the only meal held in common being 7 o'clock dinner which is provided for about 200.

The Steward is expected to dine at least two or three times a week with the Governing Body at the High Table.

All complaints as to the management and supplies come before him for investigation and remedy.

He is responsible for the accounts of all the departments under his care and these are officially audited every year.

During Full Term, the Steward is required to be continually resident and to have fixed office hours.

During Vacation he is required to reside so long as may be necessary for the proper discharge of his duties but not less than a week or half a week at both the beginning and end of a vacation according as it is long or short.

The necessary residence is thus for at least twenty-nine weeks in each year.

The Steward may not hold any other office, or undertake any educational or other work without obtaining the consent of the Governing Body.

He will be appointed in the first instance for a year, at the end of which time it is hoped that he will have proved his efficiency and enable the Governing Body to appoint him for a longer period, probably five years, at the expiration of which time he will be re-eligible.

Much the same description of the office of steward or junior bursar holds good in detail for the other colleges of Oxford or Cambridge though in most cases it may be given only in general terms as, for example, when college statutes provide that the "Junior Bursar shall, so far as possible, take charge of the domestic affairs of the college." But it can be easily imagined that the duties are extremely comprehensive. Sadler's biographer tells us that the files kept by him for his nine years of office as steward of accounts and correspondence show the great variety of the duties. "On the one hand were the recurrent (if often delicate) problems of domestic discipline, of catering and of dealing with complaints from members of Common Room" which included innumerable complaints from Lewis Carroll about milk,

drainage, gas supply, electric bell pushes, food, ginger beer, etc. "At the other end of the scale the Steward was called upon to deal with certain matters of serious moment." Thus, a block of buildings to house the poor in St. Thomas's was to be erected and the undertaking involved site allocation, architect's designs, official permissions and elaborate calculations of costs and likely rent-return on money expended. "All this was the Steward's business, who had to interview everyone concerned and attend meetings of the Governing Body to make his reports and register decisions." The biographer adds : "There can be no doubt that the experience gained at Ch. Ch. of handling colleagues and servants, of estate management, of the general complications of property, building lines, drainage and so forth was of the utmost value to him when years later he played a leading part in the discussions about the New Bodleian and became initially the inspirer of the Oxford Preservation Trust." It is of interest, however, to add that Sadler was appointed to the post of steward without any apparent qualifications whatsoever, except what natural ability he possessed and this must have been extremely theoretical for his son tells us that in 1889 when he returned to his home and found pipes freezing, he decided to remove "some woodwork in order to wrap the pipes in hot cloths ; totally devoid of skill in the use of his hands he damages the woodwork beyond repair. By the time a carpenter comes to the rescue, the pipes have once again frozen up."

We do not doubt that Sadler made an efficient steward, for his calibre was such that there were probably few jobs he could not have undertaken. But is this judgment true of every person appointed in colleges as steward or junior bursar ? May not the existence of academic amateurs in these important jobs be some explanation of the discomfort which has been part characteristic of domestic living in the older universities ? May it not also be part explanation of the losses which colleges have been sustaining, particularly of late ? (One College recently showed a loss of £4,000 in one year in the running of its kitchens.) After all, these difficult days are terribly testing even for persons skilled in domestic management.

One Cambridge steward when asked how he came to be appointed, admitted that he had protested on being asked to be steward that he knew nothing of domestic administration but was persuaded to accept appointment on being reassured that he would have a trained woman under him !* Such is the curious compromise invented in

* One Cambridge college has been wise enough to see the limits of the academic amateur. After years during which the domestic bursar (a trained woman holding the I.M.A. certificate) was subservient to the steward, Gonville and Caius College has appointed a woman to be steward with combined functions. It should be placed on record that the domestic bursar, Miss Knox, did not accept the appointment for which she had fought but, nevertheless, the Master and Fellows of the college, aware of the importance of the issue, accepted the responsibility of the creation of the novel post of Steward and Domestic Bursar.

the universities to ensure that the academic amateur shall still hold the office and appear to function with efficiency. It is, however, dangerous because few trained persons are content to exercise their craft in subjection to panto-pragmatics and a great deal of irritation is unjustifiably generated in a situation where a qualified person must in every decision taken defer to persons who are, through no fault of their own often, just ignorant pickthanks.

* * * * *

Our considered conclusion is that, although in the purely academic sphere, the academic amateur is largely successful, after wide observation of the other spheres in which he is called upon to operate and particularly those where ability in administration of practical affairs is called for, his office holding is unjustifiable, uncertain and unprofitable. Injustice is being done both to him and to the college which he is attempting to serve by asking him to accept the office of Steward or Junior Bursar.

Dr. Lloyd Prichard is researching in Cambridge on the financial history of the inter-war years.)

MRS. MACAULAY

BY DAISY L. HOBMAN

BOSWELL, in his recently published *London Journal*, relates the story of Mrs. Macaulay and Dr. Johnson which is also told in the *Life*. He quotes the doctor as saying : " Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. I came to her one day and said I was quite a convert to her republican system, and thought mankind all upon a footing ; and I begged that her footman might be allowed to dine with us. She has never liked me since, Sir, your levellers count down only the length of themselves. They would all have some people below them ; why not, then, have people above them ? " To-day this lady's name survives through a sneering reference, yet she once had a not inconsiderable reputation as a historian, among her contemporaries in England, as well as in America and France, where her work was translated at Mirabeau's suggestion. She made an income by her pen, as well she might, since each volume of her *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Elevation of the House of Hanover* sold at £4 10s. 0d. per bound copy. As a middle-aged widow she was referred to in an ode as

Britannia's glory through the world display'd,
And dauntless freedom by one matchless maid.

One of her correspondents, Augustus Toplady the hymn-writer, assured her that she owed the safeguarding of her health to her country : " If you do not take care of its best citizen, you will be guilty of the highest injustice to the public " ; and another was sufficiently illustrious to describe in a letter how it felt to be the first American President. A woman whose friends included George Washington, and whose writings, however much they may have been discredited subsequently, were based upon research in an age when feminine scholarship was altogether exceptional, must have been remarkable, and, in fact, there does emerge from the scanty data of her life the outline of a forceful and original personality.

Catherine Sawbridge was probably born in 1731, although there is a slight discrepancy about the exact date. Her father, John Sawbridge of Wye, Kent, had married Elizabeth Wanley, daughter and heiress of a London banker, so that in youth she obviously had an affluent social background. Like many other gifted women she owed much to a father with enlightened views on female education ; she was

privately taught and was encouraged to read Roman history, which is supposed to have fostered in her a lifelong passion for liberty. She was nearly thirty when, in June 1760, she married, having doubtless already spent much time in writing and research ; but as all her life she seems to have responded readily to the attraction of sex, it is not unlikely that she had had one or more love affairs during a spinsterhood unduly prolonged for those times. Her husband, George Macaulay, was a Scottish doctor who had settled in London, where he was appointed physician and treasurer to the Brownlow Street Lying-In Hospital. There was one daughter of the marriage about whom little is known. Catherine published the first volume of her *History* in 1763, and after her husband's death three years later, she remained in London, presumably absorbed in her work. In 1774, either on account of her frequent ill-health, or more likely because she found life dull, she moved to Bath, where she took a house in St. James's Parade. She had met with some very hostile criticism of her work, but in this little world of fashion she found herself duly flattered and sought after, as a literary celebrity. On her forty-fifth birthday she was presented with six odes by different authors, which were read aloud, according to one of them, to "a polite and brilliant audience," and were afterwards published. A stanza in one ode ran,

Lo ! the child of Liberty !

'Tis she ! 'tis she ! 'tis she !

Of course there was unkind gossip as well as adulation. She was frequently painted or sculptured, usually with an owl or other Minervan accessory ; a full-length portrait of her as a Roman matron in voluminous draperies represents a tall handsome woman with large features, straight wide brow and curiously retreating chin. She was considered vain and her enemies declared that she was addled with paint. Toplady cautioned her in one of his letters not to renew her acquaintance with "the dapper doctor", whoever that might have been, and above all not to be seen with him in public. The world is very malicious : and a character so eminently conspicuous as yours, is a mark at which envy and censure delight to seize every opportunity of discharging their arrows." He also encouraged her to try and forget an affair with an unnamed gentleman, who seems to have been heartless enough to have withdrawn from a promising flirtation. More satisfactory was her friendship with Dr. Thomas Wilson, rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London, whose duties apparently did not often require his presence in the capital. He placed his library at her disposal, and actually invited her to come and live in his own house in Bath. He admired her so much that he even wanted to enjoy her nearness after death, so he had a vault prepared for her remains, and placed a statue of her, with the inevitable quill pen and stacked-up volumes, within the altar-rails

of his London church. It did not remain there long.

In 1778 Catherine married again, William Graham, described as a surgeon's mate, which implies some kind of medical apprenticeship. It was an unconventional step on her part, for not only was he her social inferior, but also he was less than half her age. He was by no means the only young man to have been dazzled by the fame of a much older woman, but in such cases any ridicule is usually reserved for the woman rather than the man. The wedding took place in Lancaster on December 17, probably in order to avoid all comment in her circle until it was an accomplished fact. It was not long kept secret. Less than a fortnight later the Rev. R. Polwhele, composer of one of her birthday odes, received a letter from a friend in Bath.

E. Rack to R.P., Esq.

Bath, Dec. 29, 1778.

Poor Mrs. Macaulay ! She is irrecoverably fallen. "*Frailty*, thy name is Woman !" Her passions, even at 52 (sic), were too strong for her reason ; and she has taken to bed a stout brawny Scotchman of 21. For shame ! Her enemies' triumph is now complete. Her friends can say nothing in her favour. O, poor Catherine !—never canst thou emerge from the abyss into which thou art fallen !

Dr. Wilson's feelings may well be imagined. If there had indeed been secrecy on her part before the marriage, he would naturally have been infuriated, but the deepest wound must have been made by jealousy. He reacted immediately by removing her statue and selling her vault. The open wrath of her friend and the censorious whispers of her acquaintances must have rendered Bath an unpleasant abode for Catherine, so very sensibly she left and went to live in Leicester, and later at Binfield, Berkshire.

She had always enjoyed travelling, and before her second marriage she had visited France more than once, and had met many famous people there, including Benjamin Franklin. In 1784, or possibly a little later, she went off again, this time to North America, where she stayed for ten days with the Washingtons at Mount Vernon, their Virginian home. After her return the story of her life becomes obscure. All that can be ascertained is the date of her death, 1791, and the fact that a monument was erected to her by her second husband. He gave up medicine in order to take holy orders, and a few years after her death the Rev. William Graham, M.A., married again.

From a modern point of view Catherine Macaulay's most interesting experience was her friendship with George Washington. If he over-estimated her fame, he undoubtedly had a genuine respect for her ability. In a letter dated January 10, 1786, which he wrote to her after her visit, expressing regret for the distress caused by the heat during her journey to New York, he says : " The plaudits of a lady, so celebrated as Mrs. Macaulay (sic) Graham, could not fail of making a deep impression on my sensibility ; and my pride was more than a

little flattered by your approbation of my conduct through an arduous and painful contest." She submitted to him a "Treatise on Education" and he discussed with her the plans proposed by the Federal Constitution for the United States. And he wrote to her after his inauguration.

New York, Jan'y. 9, 1790.

In the first place I thank you for your congratulatory sentiments on the event which has placed me at the head of the American Government ; as well as for the indulgent partiality, which it is to be feared, however, may have warped your judgment too much in my favour. But you do me no more than justice in supposing that, if I had been permitted to indulge my first and finest wish, I should have remained in a private Station. Although neither the present age or Posterity may possibly give me full credit for the feelings which I have experienced on the subject ; yet I have a consciousness, that nothing short of an absolute conviction of duty could ever have brought me upon the scenes of public life again. The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness by reasonable compact in Civil Society. . . . Much was done by *prudence*, much by *conciliation*, much by *firmness*. Few who are not philosophical spectators can realize the difficult and delicate part which a man in my situation had to act. All see, and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external trappings of elevated office. To me there is nothing in it, beyond the lustre which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity. In our progress towards political happiness my station is new ; and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any action whose motives may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent. Under such a view of the duties inherent to my arduous office, I could not but feel a diffidence in myself on the one hand ; and an anxiety for the Community that every new arrangement should be made in the best possible manner on the other. If after all my humble but faithful endeavours to advance the felicity of my Country and mankind, I may indulge a hope that my labours have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing scenes of life.

There follow comments on the form of government, and the remarkable unanimity among Americans in that respect ; owing to good harvests, and increasing manufacture and trade, the whole country was recovering rapidly from the ravages of war. The letter ends :

Mrs. Washington is well and desires her compliments may be presented to you. We wish the happiness of your fireside, as we also long to enjoy that of our own at Mount Vernon. Our wishes, you know, were limited ; and I think that our plans of living will now be deemed reasonable by the considerate part of our species. Her wishes coincide with my own as to simplicity of dress, and everything which can tend to support propriety of character without partaking of the follies of luxury and ostentation. I am, with great regard, Madam.

Your most Obedient and most Humble Servant,
G^o. WASHINGTON.

Her admiration for Washington was rooted no doubt in her ardent republican faith, which presumably she never hesitated to proclaim. It is not surprising that there should have been a collision between that aggressive Radical, Mrs. Macaulay, and that not-altogether

unaggressive Tory, Dr. Johnson, who once compared her to the Amazons. This amused Boswell, and on one occasion he was sharply rebuked by the doctor for wanting to see them quarrel. His version of their famous dispute differs slightly from another contemporary account, in a letter from Toplady, which is worth quoting in full :

Feb. 13, 1755.

A few years ago, Mrs. M. and the doctor (who never had a very cordial esteem for each other) met at the house of a third person, who had invited them to spend the day. Before dinner, the conversation turned on the nature of civil government. Johnson, as usual, declared, in very strong terms, for monarchy, Mrs. M. for a republic. Some sparring passed on both sides : and Johnson happening to cite some passage of scripture, which he thought spoke in favour of his own system ; Mrs. M. undertook him on the scriptural score, and (as I was told, for I was not present) was rather more potent and pertinent, in her quotations, than he. Johnson, who does not easily digest contradiction, grew rather sour : and he well knows, that he acquits himself better in a political, an historic, or a philosophic war, than in a holy one. The annunciation of dinner occasioned a truce to debate. But the doctor, with more ill manners than I ever heard authentically placed to his account, except in this instance, took occasion, when the company were all seated at table, to renew hostilities with his amiable antagonist. Mrs. M's footman was standing, according to custom, at the back of his lady's chair ; when Johnson addressed him thus : " Henry, what makes you stand ? Sit down. Take your place at table with the best of us. We are all Republicans, Henry. There's no distinction here. The rights of human nature are equal. Your mistress will not be angry, at your asserting your privilege of peerage. We are all on a level. Do, take your chair, and sit down." This was very indelicate and rude. Nor was it arguing fairly : for a master or mistress (let the natural rights of mankind be, originally, ever so equal) has not only a just claim to superiority, but a title to the service of every person, who, by voluntary stipulation, engages to render those services for a consideration agreed upon.

Mrs. Macaulay, it seems, coloured a little, and drew up her head, but made no answer. If I had been there, I should not have let the doctor off so easily, for this savage piece of spurious wit. It is true, his great parts are entitled to proper respect : but, as Mrs. Macaulay was observing to me, when she was last in Devonshire, with reference to this very doctor Johnson : " A learned man is not so miraculous a phenomenon in this kingdom, that he should expect to be honoured with divine worship." Though, it must be owned, there are very few Johnsons, in any kingdom, or in any age.

Catherine Macaulay's reputation as a historian foundered in her own lifetime, under the charges of prejudice and inaccuracy. She was careless by nature. The elder Disraeli, in an essay called " Of Suppressors and Dilapidators of Manuscripts ", says that she was accused more than once of tearing leaves out of manuscripts on which she was doing research work in the British Museum ; many years later he added a footnote stating that this charge was denied by her second husband, but his quoted memorandum from the museum's chief librarian, addressed to her by name, cannot well be explained away. Even the devoted Toplady protested mildly when he received a long letter from her inadequately franked, so that he

had to pay double postage, although he added gallantly : " The circumstance, however, of postage is an article that I shall never think of, when Mrs. Macaulay's improving favours are the freight." Her style is anecdotal, not unpicturesque, emphatic and full of lively invective—if in her view anything is odious or imbecile, she does not hesitate to say so. The text of the *History* is heavily overweighted with footnotes. She was a republican first and foremost, and wrote a pamphlet attacking Hobbes for his arguments in favour of monarchy. She considered Queen Elizabeth greatly overrated, and thought that Burke, influenced by the charm of Marie-Antoinette, exaggerated " those scenes of regal distress." That, however, was written before the execution of the Queen of France ; and somewhat inconsistently she disapproved of Cromwell, " who deprived his sovereign of life, metely to *usurp his power*."

Her pamphlets on democratic government, the need for copyright, education and so on, reveal a lively curiosity and a wide-ranging mind. When she was about twenty-five there died another famous woman scholar, Elizabeth Elstob, author of an Anglo-Saxon grammar, who was actually born in the seventeenth century. As far as may be judged from such facts as can be ascertained about these remarkable women, who succeeded in rising above the prejudices of their times, Elizabeth Elstob was the more academic, but also the more arid of the two. She was a spinster who kept a boarding-school for a time, and died a governess in the household of the Duchess of Portland. Catherine Macaulay, on the other hand, was worldly, ready for enjoyment outside her study as well as in it. She may not have been a great or original scholar, but there is no doubt at all that she was a most vital and original woman.

CANDOUR ABOUT CANDIDA

BY A. N. GILKES

AFTER the triumphant first night of a New York production of *Candida*, Bernard Shaw—so an apocryphal story goes—cabled to the leading actress: "Magnificent, greatest ever." The gratified and unusually modest recipient cabled back: "Many thanks, undeserving such praise." G.B.S. then replied with a flash of that adolescent ostentation which often caused dismay to friends as well as foe: "I referred to the play, not to you." This time however, he failed to get away with it. The devastating retort came back: "So did I."

During fifty or more years *Candida* has received countless complimentary notices as against two or three adverse judgments, of which perhaps the most notable was Edward Carpenter's massively delivered and uncompromising: "Shaw, it will not do." The Rev. J. B. Morell and Eugene Marchbanks have been dissected with the same meticulous scrutiny as a professor of biology bestows upon his favourite specimens. But the heroine has not seldom escaped the same intimate attention, perhaps because the charm of Janet Achurch and her successors has persuaded us to take *Candida* at her Shavian face value. But once she is submitted to a dispassionate analysis the unpleasing side of her character demands a completely different attitude towards the play—a reversal similar to that which occurred at a performance of the *Alcestis* of Euripides, according to whether we regard Heracles as predominantly a hero or a buffoon.

Possibly it was Mrs. Sidney Webb, with that childlike and incisive insight that was one of her most attractive characteristics, who first recognized the "happy ending" as the final and irretrievable ruin of Morell. Once an actress has insufficient charm to prevent the audience from seeing through *Candida*, once the brilliance of the Shavian wit has failed to conceal the shallowness of his ethic, it will be found to have written, quite unintentionally, a tragedy on the well-worn theme of a good-natured, capable idealist smothered by the dominating maternal instinct of a wife who has never known the meaning of love and has never understood the contents of the marriage vow. Whether this failure was due more to Shaw's Fabianism than to his Puritanism, it is not easy to decide.

Candida is introduced to us in Act I as a woman of 33, "with the

double charm of youth and motherhood." Her characteristic expression is "an amused maternal indulgence." She is at an age when it is pleasant to imagine one is 23 and still possible to appear 28. If she is really clever, as we are told she is, we shall expect her to be alive to the danger of allowing a strong maternal instinct to degenerate into what might be crudely called "baby-snatching". But she gives herself away quite early in Act I—"Do you know, you are a very nice boy, Eugene, with all your queerness?"—and she concludes the scene by insisting that "the nice boy" stays to lunch with that curious insensitiveness to atmosphere which soon emerges as a prominent defect, but which her originator inexplicably failed to observe.

The climax of this attitude naturally comes when she and Marchbanks are alone at the beginning of Act III, and the poet tries desperately, by reading poetry aloud, to postpone the moment of proximity. She would only be justified in calling him to sit at her feet on the hearth rug if she were really what she professes to be—a wise, maternally minded mother of two children, who is about to explain the meaning of calf-love to an infatuated undergraduate. But the whole point of Act III, over which, as Shaw said, many people have sobbed so that you could hear them three streets away, lies in the reality of the battle between Morell and Marchbanks. Having only a feeble sense of the sanctity of marriage and no more conjugal loyalty than G.B.S., she "stands revealed as but one more in a long line of tentative baby-snatchers." She reminds us of the house-master's wife in *Young Woodley*, a part which three well-known actresses attempted in one year without success. Candida brings it off; but then she has the flaming sword of Shavian wit, turning this way and that, to defend her.

Two other conspicuous characteristics of hers are conceit and a kind of bright stupidity. Take this conversation:

Candida : O James dear, he was going to give the cabman ten shillings.

Morell : Never mind her, Marchbanks. The overpaying instinct is a **generous** one : better than the underpaying instinct, and not so common.

Marchbank : No, cowardice, incompetence. Mrs. Morell's quite right.

Candida : Of course she is.

The passage illustrates not only Shaw's aversion from the vague idealism to which the English are particularly addicted, but his hyperbolical, almost diabolical, habit of pushing a reasonable thesis to excess. Over-tipping is frequently due to cowardice; but deliberate meanness would have been worse than such a failure of nerve. Morell was right, as so often; but G.B.S. never saw this, and Candida's self-assurance grates on us unless we are already

bemused by her impersonation of the Modern Woman.

Almost at the height of the tension in the superbly-contrived Act III, when Marchbanks has shown "the inspiration of a child and the cunning of a serpent" in trying to upset a happily married pair, she puts her hand on her husband's shoulder and purrs: "My boy shall not be worried; I will protect him." Could a saint endure this?

Take again her remarks in Act II: "My boy is not looking well." Doubtless her husband has been too easily disturbed by Eugene's venomous ingenuity. But when the woman who has introduced the snake into the home talks in this way, she appears to unite the less satisfactory qualities of Dora Copperfield and Mr. Pecksniff. "This comes" she goes on "of James teaching me to think for myself, and now because I have just thought something different, look at him!" She is even capable of that last infirmity of ignoble feminine mind—baiting her husband in public!

Yet her conceit is not so trying as her obtuseness. The stage directions emphasize her disappointment at his failure to follow her meaning; but who is really the arch-ignoramus? She is incredibly slow (as many conceited people are) at perceiving when she is inflicting pain. "I torture James!" she exclaims incredulously after a singular display of self-deception. And when her husband protests with perhaps a rather irritating smugness: "You know I have confidence in you," think of her answer: "You vain thing, are you so sure of your irresistible attraction?" She understood his conventionally chivalrous attitude so little that she attributed it to vanity. It is not that she feels his remark is another piece of empty rhetoric; for the full seriousness of the Marchbanks situation has not reached her conscious mind. How easily James might have expressed his impatience at her stupidity! When he repeats with obvious sincerity: "I thought of your goodness, of your purity: that is what I confide in," she replies, with the discomfort of one who has already toyed with the idea of infidelity: "What a nasty uncomfortable thing to say to me! Oh, you are a clergyman, James: a thorough clergyman." Only one who shared Shaw's prejudice against the Christian Church could fail to see on whose side the nastiness lay.

Act II ends with her anxious inquiry: "Is anything the matter, James? I can't understand..." For all her confidence and all her wit, she never has understood her husband; for she has never understood what loyalty in marriage means. Nor, unfortunately, did the attractive genius who created her. In a well-known letter to Ellen Terry, Shaw wrote: "Candida is the Virgin Mother and nobody else." Now the maternal instinct is all very well in its way, but is there not something indecent in a married woman desiring to extend

purely maternal protection not only to her husband but to a young poet who has precipitated himself into calf-love with her and does his best to break up a happy marriage ? She thinks little of her husband's old-fashioned offer of "my strength for your defence, my honesty for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity." Marchbanks would call this a possessive and *bourgeois* view of a husband's duty : she appears to think the same. But she gloats, like some female spider before she devours the male, and she smiles as he kneels before her and declares : "You are my wife, my mother, my sisters ; you are the sum of all loving care to me." She has completed his ruin and is ready to consummate the process of turning him from a clergyman into an ornamental poodle. If it were true that he cannot do without "cuddling and petting by some nice woman" and if she wished to ruin him, the last way to do it would be to increase his dependence upon her.

A highly intelligent critic has suggested that James kneels to Candida not as an individual woman, but as the Virgin Mother. I do not think G.B.S. ever claimed this, but I am certain that he would have liked the phrase and the faint air of blasphemy which lingers in it. But the trenchant comment of Mrs. Sidney Webb contains a far truer appreciation : "Candida is the sentimental prostitute." But Shaw never knew it. His generous nature had early revolted against the hypocrisy with which Christians around him joined in the scramble for money and were ready to fatten on the poverty of the slums. His penetrating intelligence was impatient with the unessential beliefs which adhered to orthodox Christianity, like barnacles to the bottom of a boat. His pretentious conceit kept him from an impartial study of the life of one before whom his genius must stand ashamed and bowed. He had no altar in his soul, though he made several unconvincing attempts to build one and to find for himself some invisible means of support. Having written of himself that he was "prodigiously self-satisfied with his superiority" he was likely to find it hard to go down into the Valley of Humiliation where the true Christian usually starts his pilgrimage. With these handicaps he made a hash of the Morell household. Yet for all this, Mr. Hesketh Parson's judgment that "he is the only playwright who has successfully drawn the religious temperament" is much nearer the truth than the fulminations of those who detested his demand that the Church should learn humility as well as teach it.

But we have not yet plumbed the depth of Candida's iniquity. With his gifts and connections, Morell could have had the most fashionable parish in Bayswater or Kensington, where the Easter offering would realize £1,200—in those days probably free of tax. But he chose a "desert of unattractiveness" near the outer end of

the Hackney Road. On his shelves beside Browning and Morris can be found "half a dozen other literary landmarks in Socialism." He is, or was until his marriage, a first-rate clergyman, devoted to his work and to his Christian ideals which, as they required no special intelligence for their comprehension, made a straightforward appeal to his second-rate brain. He prevented his father-in-law from securing a dishonest contact ; he fought the exploitation of the poor by the Crofts Warren Company ; and he is ready to sacrifice a city dinner in order to talk to "half a dozen ignorant costermongers."

But since his marriage, he has become more popular, more rhetorical, more intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity. He slaps his caricature of a curate on the back with excessive heartiness, indulging at the time in a series of out-of-date clichés. In fact, he has reached the stage when a shrewd wife (and all good wives must accept this as one of their duties) should do something to deflate his growing pomposity. How does she set about it ? She begins with the old, and, in her case, quite insincere complaint of the neglected wife :

Why must you go out every night lecturing and talking ? I barely have an evening a week with you. Of course what you say is all very true, but it does no good : they don't mind what you say to them one little bit . . . Look at our congregation at St. Dominic's ! Why do they come to hear you talking about Christianity every Sunday ? Why, just because they've been so full of business and money-making for six days that they want to forget all about it and have a rest on the seventh, so that they can go back fresh and make money harder than ever. You positively help them at it instead of hindering them . . . They're all in love with you. And you are in love with preaching because you do it so beautifully. And you think it's all enthusiasm for the kingdom of Heaven on earth ; and so do they. You dear silly !

This is brilliantly said, but it resembles Napoleon's description of the English in *The Man of Destiny*. It is not Candida but G.B.S. speaking, and making a deadly, and largely valid, attack upon Victorian church-going and "popular" preaching. But any Christian is aware of the danger of mixed motives—both his own and other people's—which may animate churchgoers. It is Shaw's obliquity of vision about Christianity that has caused him to fasten another unattractive trait upon his heroine.

Morell knows what love means ; she does not. Being the only person in the play who has the faintest grasp of Christian standards of behaviour, he gives his wife a loyalty that she is too conceited to appreciate and too shallow to understand. He can say proudly that he earned his golden moment when he asked her to marry him, but that he did not use it to steal another man's happiness. He reaches a higher level than Candida, or G.B.S., ever reached. When he says he is only the poor parson who does not understand, he is,

perhaps, right in one respect ; he does not understand his wife's shallowness. And the deepening tragedy of the play—quite the opposite of what the author intended—lies in the fact that he probably never will. At the conclusion, when she has outsoared her husband's flight of eloquence and claimed, quite truly, that she builds a castle of comfort and love and indulgence for him, she utters a platitude about married life : “ I make him master here.” A pity she has never grasped the Chestertonian paradox that the woman is all the more the centre of the house because she is not its head ; a greater pity still that she has not observed what she has done to him. Her obtuse possessiveness stifles in us any such amused anticipation as that with which we watch Ann Whitfield stalking her prey or Lady Cicely converting Captain Brassbound. The true tragedy is to hear Morell's “ what I am, you have made me with the labour of your hands ” and to see another good man ruined by the worship of an inferior woman.

It is time someone produced this play with the correct emphasis. It need not be cut, as G.B.S. urged the cutting of Shakespeare ; nor rewritten, as Garrick rewrote *Lear* ; nor distorted, as Irving distorted *Hamlet*. It can be played straight, so that it will become, not the second Pleasant, but the Fourth Unpleasant play. The final moments over which Ellen Terry shed so many tears will not be ruined ; the departure of Eugene into the night—that true realm of the poet which waits for him as for Tristan and Isolde—will still be a most moving incident. But there will be a more impressive tragedy still. The fine idealist and the true Christian, his belief in his mission now undermined and his belief in his wife even further enhanced, moves forward into the embrace that brings him destruction, while over his shoulder Candida murmurs “ Ah, James ” with her “ characteristic expression of amused maternal indulgence.”

(The author is the headmaster of Dean Close School, Cheltenham.)

THE AUCTION

BY GERALD BULLETT

ON a day in October the villagers gathered
In the rectory garden, a garrulous company,
To enjoy the remains of the reverend gentleman
Who had married and buried them for half a century.
His dust was dissolving in the church yard.
His ghost pottered in the purlieus of memory.
Remained his garment to be parted among them,
The garment of his spirit, his soul's livery,
Soaked in himself by years of usage.

Warming-pans, water-colours, blankets, bedding,
Carpets, curtains, crocks and casseroles,
A galvanized dustbin, a garden roller,
A portable rosewood desk, genuine antique,
Blunt on the Pentateuch, bound volumes of Punch,
A carved walnut stool on cabriole legs,
Mahogany toilet mirror with two drawers,
Prie-dieu chairs upholstered in petit point,
A set of ivory chessmen and sundry games,
Glass, china, pewter, a useful wheelbarrow,
Brushes and brooms and books various :
These his eyes had looked on, his blunt fingers
Handled, these from his brooding being
Had taken life, character, personality,
That now were items in a printed catalogue,
Yet quick, still, with intangible intimidations,
Life in still life, of their bachelor husband.

A raggedry of rooks in the high elms,
Deceived into dreams of domesticity
By the benign unseasonable semblance of spring,
Circled excitedly with raucous caws
Discussing architectural details,
While far below them, on the lank lawn,
Under the golden dome of the wide sky,

The assembled humans, all sorts and sizes,
Craned their necks for a sight of the auctioneer.

Farmers there were, i' faith, and farmers' wives ;
Of womenfolk no dearth, I tell you troth.
Trim tweeds and homespun mingled here their lives,
Busy for bargains, gentle and simple both :
Old men and yong, good felawes of all tradès,
(Dan Chaucer give me grace my tale to tell),
And eke a baronet who with his ladies
Appraised the price of all was there to sell.

And one I was ware of in the living likeness
Of him who was hight/Piers the Plowman,
Honest and earthy, kingly of his kind,
Scored and scarred with centuries of suffering,
Pattern and paragon, mirror and memorial,
Of simple men beseeeking a saviour.
Hobbinol the shepherd mixed with his masters,
And Colin Clout, come home from the wars,
And Poitiers pikemen and Agincourt archers
Exchanging chaff with their comrades in khaki
Appeared from the past in a motley mingle
Of Spenser's pastoral and Langland's England.
Quince the carpenter, Snug and Starveling,
Brave Bully Bottom and Robin Goodfellow,
Lady Hippolyta magnificent in mink,
And the Greek duke and the grave Egeus
Artlessly English as ' a wood in Athens '
Gleamed for a glance on the verge of vision,
To vanish like vapour at rub of the eyes.
And I said to myself, in a moment of musing,
When time and wickedness have done their worst,
The human habitat a ruin of rubble,
The lanes levelled and the fields aflame,
Still shall stir in the memory of man
Living his last in a waste world
The lingering legend of a green island,
A field full of folk, a pastoral peace.

But now, at last, through our crowding company
Ran and rustled a stir of expectancy,
As sitting astride a stool on a table,
Alert for the curt nods of deedy dealers,
Neat Mr. Noakes, lifting an eyelid, began

Scattering patter among us like coloured confetti,
 While the plump clerk sitting sequacious beside him
 Punctually pencilled destination and price,
 Lot by lot, of the marketed mystery.

Myself, idly aware, wondered whether
 Presently would appear a phantom figure,
 And the risen rector's venerable voice
 Testily tell us we were all intruders.
 But the bidding went on, seasoned with genial
 Jokes from Nokes and the nudging neighbours,
 And a hundred and forty-five human fragments,
 Severed bits and pieces of a long life,
 One by one came under the hovering hammer.
 Heaven maintained its immemorial muteness,
 And the turning in the tomb made no noise.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor THE FORTNIGHTLY.

Sir,

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE COLOURED VOTER

May I comment on one point in the article by Sir Charles Dundas in your December issue?

He says that the removal of the Cape Coloured Voters from the common electoral roll is "an academic point" which the present Government have passed for reasons "ideological rather than practical."

No one doubts the presence of ideological considerations. But there is also a practical reason which is no less important to the Nationalists. In 1948 the Nationalist-Afrikaner Party coalition (now merged into one party) obtained a majority of seven over the United Party-Labour coalition in a house of 153. Most people regard that as the high water mark of likely Nationalist achievement under the present constitution, reinforced later by the six S.W.A. seats.

Now, although it is true that (over the country as a whole) "the coloured vote carried little weight in elections," it is no longer true when the parties are so closely balanced; and there are between five and ten Cape constituencies (probably six) in which the small Coloured vote is thought to hold the balance of power. And while it is probably historically true that "that little (Coloured vote) is said to have weighed as often as not in favour of Afrikaner candidates," this is certainly untrue if it is meant to infer that more than a small fraction of the Coloureds have ever supported a candidate pledged to *apartheid* or the white *baasskap*, as Dr. Malan has used those words since 1938. Not all Afrikaners are Nationalists and a United Party Afrikaner

or one pledged to Hertzog's policy would to-day receive Coloured support as strongly as ever they did. But no Nationalist can expect more than a pittance of the Coloured vote. In the marginal constituencies, therefore, the balance always tilts one way—at least since 1938.

It is, of course, extremely distasteful to Nationalist thought that a non-European community can thus have the opportunity of deciding the result of an election. But further, and not less welcome than the abolition of this undesirable ideological state of affairs, would be the practical outcome of such abolition. For the removal of the Coloured voters will almost certainly swing six Cape seats from the United Party to the Nationalists—a net gain of 12. As against this the United Party will be able to count on the four Coloured representatives, as it does on the three Native representatives created in 1936. But the final gain to the Nationalists out of the whole transaction will still be eight and with the parties as evenly balanced as they were in 1948 and still appear to be to-day, that is a far from negligible advantage.

Yours faithfully,

C. W. M. GELL.

Transvaal, South Africa.

To the Editor, THE FORTNIGHTLY.

Sir,

ENGLAND AS AN EX-WORLD POWER

My attention has been drawn to an article by Mr. J. H. Huizinga in the January 1952 issue of THE FORTNIGHTLY in which he quotes a statement made by myself. Though Mr. Huizinga has learnt English well enough, I imagine he is a foreigner with an unfortunate ignorance of what makes for greatness in this country.* His long cry of misery about Britain not being a world power ignores all factors save the present economic maladjustment between the U.S. and the rest of the world. Mr. Huizinga will find that this problem will be tackled with the same courage, determination and success as preserved us in 1940. Perhaps he should take note that one of our main problems is to stimulate nations across the Channel who once prevailed against the might of a Philip II or a Louis XIV to generate within themselves a similar strength of character and will-to-live so that they may help restore to the European continent something of its former power and authority.

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD PILKINGTON.

London, N.W.8.

* Mr. Huizinga has been a newspaper correspondent in England for many years. He is the son of the late Dr. J. Huizinga, the Dutch philosopher.—*Editor*.

THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

THE CLAIMS OF REASON

BY OWEN HICKEY

AN exposition of Spinoza's thought may seem an odd choice for the first* of a series of "Pelican philosophies" under the general editorship of Professor Ayer, both when one considers the editor and his public, which is presumably wider than the band of professional philosophers. Spinoza's *Ethics* is not on many people's lists of the books they must read one day; his rationalism, both its motives and its concepts, is closer to ancient and medieval thought than to modern, and metaphysics, of which he was such an uncompromising practitioner, is highly suspect just now. (It was Professor Ayer as much as anyone who has been responsible for the low ebb of its fortunes, and one may see in the promotion of this book a handsome gesture to a fallen enemy). On the other hand Spinoza raised in an acute form and answered unequivocally almost all the traditional questions of philosophy, and anyone who is bored or repelled by his work may safely conclude that philosophy is not for him. For this reason the choice of first volume was a good one.

Voltaire apostrophizing Spinoza told him that he was not as dangerous as people made out, because he was muddled, wrote bad Latin, and because there were not ten people in Europe who had read him from one end to the other. His writing is indeed forbiddingly austere. Euclid's *Elements* was his ideal of rational argument and his own *Ethics* has all the appearance of this model, except that the text is not relieved by pictures. He expounds his argument from definitions and axioms, through proposition, corollaries, lemmas and proofs, interspersed with notes of elucidation. Any serious attempt to interpret this must catch something of

its austerity and rigour, and Mr. Hampshire's book is not light reading, but he writes with such ease and clarity that it is nowhere difficult to follow him. He shows, as an expositor should, a remarkable sympathy for his subject—remarkable because in a chapter at the end, "The Nature of Metaphysics", he displays his own doubts about the value of speculative metaphysics.

In this short and valuable chapter, Mr. Hampshire suggests two ways in which speculative systems such as Spinoza's are important; first that they are outline programmes for the future advance of natural science, in which however they are liable to become superseded, and also that they exhibit in exaggerated form certain central problems of logic.

Most metaphysical systems can be in part interpreted as exaggerated projections upon reality of some obsessive difficulty of logic or of the forms of language . . . It is this fact (among others) which makes the great metaphysical systems seem permanently instructive.

Squeezing the logical and linguistic juice from metaphysics is a legitimate way of relating it to contemporary philosophical interests, but, as Mr. Hampshire acknowledges, this is not to do justice to the metaphysician's own claims. He is writing about Reality and not language or logic; he claims that his conclusions about the universe and man's place in it are not merely important but all-important. His claims are elaborately supported and must be taken seriously. To knock him out on the *a priori* grounds that he is barking up a tree in a mirage is, as has often been pointed out in the last 20 years, to fell him with an equally hallucinatory axe. He must be judged by the strength of the chain of his own

* *Spinoza*, by Stuart Hampshire. Penguin Books. 2s. 6d.

argument, each link being examined for flaws. Mr. Hampshire shows in one place the kind of way in which this examination might proceed, but it is still waiting to be done. One would have been grateful for more critical passages of this kind, but it would of course have swollen the size of his book and altered its character.

Isolated propositions in Spinoza's work cannot be fully understood (nor certainly can their claims to be true) without reference to all that precedes them and a good deal that follows—this is in the nature of all deductive systems. It is interesting however to toy with certain of his conclusions and look at them again in the light of modern knowledge. Of these none is more pertinent than his doctrine of the relationship between mind and body and the connected doctrine of determinism. Thought and extension (the mental and physical worlds) were for Spinoza two attributes of a single substance; any modification of the substance could be conceived of indifferently under either attribute. From this it follows (to put it crudely) that every physical change in our bodies has a mental side to it, and *vice versa*. This is not to say that a mental event is *caused* by a physical event, nor is it strictly to say that there is a series of mental events running in exact correlation to a physical series. There is only one series but it has two aspects, mental and physical. The perennial difficulty of the two-way causal relation between mind and body which we assume at the level of common-sense is avoided. It will be surprising if the physiologists as they continue their probings into the brain do not use as a working hypothesis what Spinoza deduced as a necessary consequence of the order of nature. There is no room in his universe for any event that is not predetermined in the sense of being necessarily connected with the other events before and after it, and, since man is very much part of nature, his behaviour is no exception to the rule. He is no more the genuine originator

of what happens to him than dogs or sticks or stones. He appears to himself to have freedom of decision and to "exercise his will" only because he is ignorant of the true causes of what he does. "Experience teaches us no less clearly than reason that men believe themselves to be free, simply because they are conscious of their actions, and unconscious of the causes whereby their actions are determined." In Spinoza's day this assertion was greeted with shocked remonstrance. We are more likely to be impressed by it as we have partial empirical confirmation of its probability. The more of human behaviour psychologists explain by unconscious motivation and sociologists explain as the direct result of environmental influence, the narrower becomes the territory that we are inclined to stake out for free will.

Spinoza's virtue was that he elicited at least some of the consequences of this doctrine, and that he also demonstrated how indissolubly linked are metaphysics, theology and morals. The denial that there is a transcendent God, who gives final purpose to human life, and sits in judgment on mortal men, is a stone in his deductive arch; it is both a necessary consequence and a necessary premise of determinism. A reading of Spinoza would be a salutary exercise for those who maintain that Christian morality should stand and Christian theology be scrapped. The *Ethics* shows how vulnerable received morality is when stripped of its theological armour, for it is deprived of all rational justification.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND GREAT BRITAIN 1908-1914, by A. F. Pribram. *Oxford University Press: Geoffrey Cumberlege.* 25s.

Mr. Pribram was for many years Professor of Modern History in the University of Vienna. He hoped to add to his many studies of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, a history of the diplomatic relations between Austria-Hungary and Great Britain based on published documents. But

he was unable to complete the task and the present work, left in manuscript, was translated for publication by his literary executor, Mr. Ian D. F. Morrow. It is the third volume of the uncompleted history.

Though the two countries were in opposing camps, their national interests were not necessarily in conflict. They went to war because they could not avoid it without risking at least their status as great powers. The British Government were less interested in the effect of Austria-Hungary's policy upon the Serbs than in Russia's reaction to that policy. Following the fateful annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, and during the crisis of July 1914, the concern of the Foreign Office related solely to the attitude of other powers. If Russia should mobilize to aid the South Slavs, and France should follow her ally into war, could Great Britain safely keep out if Germany, in support of the Dual Monarchy, struck towards Paris and the Channel? It was the problem of Philip II, Louis XIV and Napoleon revived. To the Foreign Office, it was a necessary war even before the Germans made it a just war by attacking Belgium. Great Britain did not join the struggle to dissolve the Dual Monarchy, nor to defeat its designs in the Balkans, but to prevent a German hegemony over Europe.

To Austria-Hungary, the issue was grimmer still. As the book emphasizes, public opinion was convinced that this time the existence of the Dual Monarchy itself was at stake.

How it could be replaced by anything but chaos was not envisaged. The Serbian military successes and territorial gains in the Balkan wars were a standing encouragement not only to the Slavs who had been made subjects of the empire by the Bosnian annexation, but also to the restive and aspiring nationalities throughout the empire. The murder of Francis Ferdinand did more than provide an opportunity for the war party to demand impossible terms from Belgrade; it ended Francis Joseph's genuine and shrewd resistance to war.

Even if the moves to render the Serbs impotent as a nation brought the Russians to their rescue, the possibility had to be faced. "Better a fearful end than endless fears" was the thought of one statesman in Vienna.

This work will appeal both to the scholar and to the general reader. It maintains a welcome liveliness and lucidity. An outstanding feature is the vivid appraisal of the characters of the aged Francis Joseph and his Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal. It must be added that the excellence of the index only partially compensates for the complete absence of maps. Some readers may find this omission particularly regrettable in the striking introductory chapter which surveys Anglo-Austrian relations through seven centuries.

I. FINESTEIN

AFRICAN MORNING, by R. O. Hennings. *Chatto & Windus*. 18s.
THE METROPOLITAN ORGANIZATION OF BRITISH COLONIAL TRADE, by Kathleen Stahl. *Faber & Faber*. 25s.

Some people are lucky enough to be able to look back on a time in their lives which they regard as the peak of their experience, when they lived most fully and most zestfully and which, ever after, they remember with a poignant sense of gratitude. To Mr. Hennings, it may well be his tour of service as a young District Officer among the tribes of Northern Kenya. In a fresh and happy book he describes the time he spent among these people, Kamasia, Suk and Marakwet, still at that time untouched by planners, developers and politicians, untroubled by the itch for irrelevant possessions or for alien (and doubtful) privileges. Part Hamitic, part Nilotic, largely pastoral in habit, relations of the richer Nandi further south, they live in the region of Lake Baringo and belong to a race that includes some of the most beautiful people in the world.

Mr. Hennings has no pretensions to profundity. His book is not an anthropological treatise nor a study in

colonial administration. Nor does he claim originality, for, as he says, other District Officers have done much the same sort of thing in the ordinary course of duty. His aim is "simply to catch the momentary gleam of life as it was lived at a particular place and time." In a sense he underrates himself. It has been said that the British are good at dealing with primitive people but fail in their relations with the more advanced. Whatever the validity of the second part of this antithesis, Mr. Hennings unconsciously demonstrates the truth of the first and for that reason alone he goes deeper than he modestly claims. Another merit is that he sketches a way of life that is vanishing and that many modern administrators will not see for themselves. Though the classic of the *genre* still remains Kenneth Bradley's *Diary of a District Officer*, Mr. Hennings' book, which by the way, has splendid photographs, is well worthy to stand on the same shelf. To those who have had similar experiences it will bring nostalgia, while to those who know little about our colonial administration it will give some idea of the gaiety, the enthusiasm, the humanity with which British Africa is governed.

In contrast, Mrs. Stahl is concerned with a factor which, as much as any other, disrupts the world of Mr. Hennings' happy pastoralists. Taking four regions of the British Colonial Empire, she describes London commercial interests in each, the way in which the leading firms are organized, their relations one with another and the way in which they shape policy in London and in the Colony itself. The regions she has chosen are the West Indies, Malaya, Ceylon (before that country became a Dominion) and East Africa. Other areas would no doubt have done as well for the purpose of her thesis, but it happens that her choice is felicitous, as each of her four regions has something peculiar to itself that is not shared with the others.

The work is primarily for the

specialist, but the general reader too may find something to stimulate the imagination in the recital of the great merchant houses, of which some go back to the eighteenth century, with their widespread ramifications. Generally speaking, colonization has sprung from commerce and the flag has followed trade; these enterprises, often at considerable risk, have therefore played an important part in the foundation of the Empire, a part that certainly deserves the detailed study it now receives.

Colonial enterprise of the kind that Mrs. Stahl describes is at present undergoing considerable changes, partly owing to controls, partly to increasing participation by governments in economic matters and partly to a growing national consciousness on the part of colonial peoples themselves. Indeed, some might say that Mr. Hennings and Mrs. Stahl have this in common, that each describe a world that is dying. Nevertheless the greater part of commercial activity, in the colonies as well as in Great Britain, is still left to private concerns, and Mrs. Stahl's book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of a rather neglected subject. In particular it will provide the student with pointers to a wide field of research into the inter-action of trade and politics.

A. SILLERY

THE LATER DYNASTIES OF EGYPT, by the late Lt.-Colonel P. G. Elgood, C.M.G. *Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 15s.*

Colonel Elgood's scholarly account of the history of the later dynasties of Egypt covers 870 years from the emergence of the 20th Dynasty in B.C. 1200 down to the eclipse of the 31st Dynasty and the arrival in Egypt of Alexander the Great in B.C. 330. This was not a great period in Pharaonic history although under Ramases III of the 20th Dynasty and Sheshonk I of the 22nd Dynasty there were times of great domestic and imperial power and

prosperity. But the rivalries between Upper and Lower Egypt persisted monotonously down the centuries ; and to exacerbate this state of confusion, there was the added complication of the unique and powerful position which the Egyptian priesthood arrogated to itself in its relations with the crown, and the reality of Egyptian beliefs in their gods whose influence regularly emerged to affect the course of Egyptian history and, on many occasions, the fate of an Egyptian Pharaoh.

But the story is generally one of imperial ebb and flow as aggressive Egyptian successes were succeeded by swamping foreign counter-attacks—Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Greek. So much so indeed that Egyptian prosperity was normally in a chronic state of flux while Egyptian power was slowly but surely sapped down to its foundations. All this Colonel Elgood has brought out with all its implications. But his book has another and a wider attraction for the student of Middle East history down to the time of Alexander the Great.

The picture he has painted is as much of the Middle East as it is of Egypt and he has blended into its texture other incidents of neighbouring history with most satisfying deftness. For instance, much of his Egyptian history links up with the Old Testament story—the Empire of Solomon, the quick dilemma of Israel, the wonderful tale of Rab Shakeh and King Hezekiah, the defeat and death of King Josiah at the battle of Megiddo and the successive deportations of Jewish populations to Assyria and Babylon. And further afield there is the rôle played by Egypt during the rise of the first Persian Empire and during its final eclipse by Alexander the Great. Lastly, there is the well-told story of how Alexander identified himself with Egyptian godhead and founded Alexandria as a friend of Egypt and not as her conqueror.

On such a vast stage covering so many moving centuries, figures appear and disappear at a speed which inevitably blurs their identity ; but Colonel

Elgood's great gift of scholarly narrative has largely succeeded in defeating possible confusion in the mind of the reader by the creation of a real and lively picture of a long and previously little co-ordinated period of Middle Eastern history in which Egypt—even in decline—loomed so large both in victory and defeat.

The index is adequate ; but the book would have been greatly improved by the addition of a map of contemporary Egypt.

OWEN TWEEDY

CHINA TO CHITRAL, by H. W. Tilman. *Cambridge University Press.* 25s.

THE ORPHANED REALM, by Patrick Balfour. *Percival Marshall.* 18s.

THREE ROMANTIC COUNTRIES, by Douglas Goldring. *Macdonald.* 15s.

It is said, and Mr. Tilman likes to believe it, that the strongest objection to the building of the first railway in China was on the grounds that such remarkably long, straight lines would facilitate the movement of devils, who move only in straight lines. We may rejoice to see how Mr. Tilman has frustrated them in this admirable book, for in his most urbane manner he has now and then digressed from the straight narrative of his mountaineering achievements. Thus we are told that in a Kansu restaurant the proprietor, regardless of expense, provided, in case the chopsticks had not been washed, two bits of paper. A postmaster from Canton at another place produced a dinner of Cantonese food, which in China is regarded as *hors concours*. Fried oysters on lettuce perhaps qualified as a "dish to be eaten on one's knees"; but Mr. Tilman is of opinion that the custom of drinking tea before dinner and brandy throughout is rather to be permitted than approved. A good ending for a Chinese dinner is a famous blend of Hangchow tea with chrysanthemum petals floating in it, which is perhaps the 'Precious Thunder Tea' of which one reads in Marco Polo. These

digressions may cause the innumerable Tilman devotees to wonder if in this book he has deserted for a while his beloved mountains. They will be made happy when they turn over the pages and also when they gaze at the 70 superb photographs which are worthy of himself and his publishers.

For many years Cyprus was neglected by the British authorities who, however, have in the last two decades earned, if they have not quite obtained, the islanders' gratitude. When this most informative book by a great lover of Cyprus, Mr. Patrick Balfour (Lord Kinross), attracts, as it surely will, a swarm of travellers the gratitude will increase, as it will again when the Admiralty decides to spend the rather moderate sum which will make Famagusta into a first-class port. It may be that the brilliant days of the Lusignans will return, the Lusignans to whom Richard Coeur de Lion sold the island after the Knights of St. John, to whom he had previously sold it, found they could not administer it—and Richard forgot to return to the Knights what they paid him. Mr. Balfour has apparently forgotten nothing in the extremely picturesque story of the island.

Mr. Douglas Goldring takes us in his book to the Adriatic, Ireland and Portugal. He enjoyed himself, more or less, in those travels as much as his readers will now be able to do. One may wonder how he could bring himself to sail past the island of Rab without landing there, for his illustration of that wonderful outline, which resembles a ship in full sail, is most appealing. And one can assure him that the two hotels are not less excellent than that one in the little Montenegrin port of Antivari which made him open his eyes wider and wider. He was disappointed at not seeing any of the troubadours who go about the country singing the exploits of old-time heroes, but one may doubt whether the monotonous music of the one-stringed *gusla* would have evoked his enthusiasm. However he is, evidently, full of kindness, for he speaks of the "immense popularity"

of King Nicholas. But that gentleman was wise enough to retire to a Paris suburb after the 1914-1918 war, instead of venturing to return to a people who would have made short work of him after his written orders to his son Peter to give up, during the war, the impregnable Lovćen that had been reproduced at Serajevo in facsimile.

When Mr. Goldring was in Portugal in 1934 he found that hotel porters were "mines of misinformation"; he himself in telling us what this and that costs in escudos might really add what an escudo is worth. But his chapters on Ireland are full of information; it seems that in 1495 the Earl of Kildare told Henry VII, before whom he was arraigned, that he would not have burnt down the Cashel cathedral if he had not believed that the Archbishop was inside it. He was rewarded by being made the King's Deputy.

HENRY BAERLEIN

WILKIE COLLINS : A Biography, by Kenneth Robinson. *The Bodley Head*. 18s.

Wilkie Collins, who died on September 23, 1889, was, after Charles Dickens, the most popular British novelist of his time. His best novels, published nearly a century ago, are still widely read and admired. He was the most intimate friend of the mature Dickens, upon whose later books he exercised a profound influence. His writings have been highly praised by severe critics, among them Swinburne and Mr. T. S. Eliot. Yet Mr. Robinson's is the first full-length biography of this notable man.

In a Bombay hospital towards the end of the war, Mr. Robinson came to know Wilkie Collins as an author, and was made curious to know what he was like as a man. He found, as others have found, that biographical data were hard to come by—much was in America. By 1948 he concluded that a biography of Collins, for whom he had now conceived an affection, was long overdue, and he determined to write one himself. After much pains-

taking research, he has done it excellently—clearly, concisely and with unfailing interest—embodying a wealth of hitherto unpublished material that throws fresh light not only on Collins but on the amazing personality of his friend Dickens.

Collins' fame now rests on two novels—*The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*—and on his short stories, one, *The Dream Woman*, being almost unequalled for sheer horror. *The Moonstone* is generally considered his masterpiece. According to Mr. T. S. Eliot, it is "the first, the longest, and the best of the modern English detective novels," and Miss Dorothy Sayers writes: "By comparison with its wide range, its dovetailed completeness, and the marvellous variety and soundness of its characterization, modern mystery fiction looks thin and mechanical." Dickens and Swinburne were enthusiastic in praise of *The Moonstone*. *The Woman in White* has also had famous admirers. Thackeray sat up all night reading it; Edward FitzGerald was devoted to it, and it was the favourite novel of its author, who on his tombstone is described, by his own direction, as the "author of *The Woman in White* and other works of fiction." In Mr. Robinson's view, "for sheer storytelling it stands supreme." Collins' ambition was to excel as a teller of stories. Taking Scott as his master, whom he delighted to call "the Prince, the King, the Emperor, the God Almighty of novelists," he set himself with infinite pains to construct narratives that should grip the reader's attention at the outset and retain it to the end. He attained his aim with brilliant success not only in the two novels that form the peaks of his achievement, but in a number of others, especially in *Armada* and *No Name*. In his power of constructing an enthralling plot he has few if any equals, and he could create interesting characters and call up at will an atmosphere charged with presage of thrilling events. This reviewer's studies in Collins' writings began in the early 1880's, and

he is glad to have survived to welcome Mr. Robinson's informative and companionable book.

G. F. MCCLEARY

BOSWELL'S COLUMN : 1777-1783.

Edited by Margery Bailey. William Kimber. 21s.

These 70 essays ran for nearly six years in *The London Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, and closed only when it became larger and more ambitious. There is no means of telling whether Boswell retired on his own initiative or his employers'.

When the tempo of the full life was gentler a monthly could discharge a good deal of what is now demanded of a daily newspaper, a weekly review and a monthly magazine. Accordingly Boswell's article, on the first page of the journal, stood opposite the stock-exchange prices on the inside of the cover. Subsequently he sank to a humbler eminence, among reviews of books and the theatre and what are now called snappy news items about people in the public eye. His steadiest rival was a serial usually headed "Female Virtue and Greatness displayed in Principle and Conduct", and on the later page appeared a monthly chronology which included, besides a summary of the month's events, information now for the most part carried by the *London Gazette* and the front page of *The Times*.

The series was published under the pseudonym of "The Hypochondriack". Melancholy was a European affliction in the eighteenth century; the editor's testimony that it is not unknown in America in the twentieth supports a recent distinguished claim that its real origin was over-eating. Boswell's column was written so that at least once a month he might be rescued from himself by enforced activity. He experienced a little lift of the heart when he saw his work in print, and hoped his readers did too. He adopted towards them something of the attitude of influential lady columnists in the daily press; he was lightly homiletic, and

difficult to take seriously.

"Perhaps, indeed," he says in his concluding contribution, and his publishers fasten on it briskly, "I have poured out myself with more freedom than prudence will approve, and I am aware of being too much an egotist." Not at all, sir; your latter-day readers will be disappointed at your restraint. This collection is in some sense exploitation of recent curiosity, and it is in fact very ordinary as a document in self-revelation. Reading between the lines is an unhelpful process, because it is sadly easy for a columnist to see himself as he would like others to see him. We can deduce a little of what we knew already—that Boswell liked wine and boasting about women, that he enjoyed money and his seigniory of Auchinleck and the affectation of learning, and that public executions fascinated him. And running through his discourse is a vein of self-conscious Johnsonian adulation, soft-pedalled with British reticence. "The Hypochondriack" does Boswell's reputation no good. Professor Bailey's editorial labours have been welcome but not entirely necessary; a great part of her diligence is consumed in tracking down Boswell's carelessness.

JOHN HILARY WHALE

THE AGE OF WREN, by Ralph Dutton. *Batsford*. 42s.

From time to time, in architecture as in the other arts, a flood of new ideas has reached this country from some foreign source. It had to make its impact first on the native art. The resistance has been greater at some periods than others; such a period was the eleventh century, another the thirteenth, and others the sixteenth and the eighteenth. At all these times the native habit can be recognized under the foreign fashion—sometimes with grotesque results, sometimes as an element of delight. Our Renaissance was both late and different from that of the Continent. Gothic features were still mixed with its architecture

midway in the seventeenth century, and these were never wholly obliterated. Some great palaces built in the century before and the one after have remained exotic to this day. They have never sunk into the English landscape. Such a building is Burleigh House, near Stamford; another is Blenheim Palace.

The age of Wren comes between these two examples. If we find the term 'baroque' unsatisfying as a description of his style, we might be able to agree that it expressed something rather less or more than that foreign word (which originally derived from the work of Michelangelo and was applied to all the arts). Wren's fore-runners were Italians in reaction against the cold formalism of the second half of the fourteenth century; his examples were French rather than Italian; his manner was English. He found an English idiom for a foreign art which was brand new in 1525 and was still half foreign under Inigo Jones. His buildings grew into the landscape. The clouds and rain and fitful sunshine of English skies added the undertones.

This work helps us to appreciate Wren's versatility. The reader is cautioned against the acceptance of many local claims to unverified work. One man could not possibly have designed all these buildings. Yet the volume and scope of his work are astonishing. Of St. Paul's it is enough to repeat his own *circumspice*! So with Hampton Court, Tom Tower and Greenwich. But do we all remember Chelsea Hospital, Kensington Palace or Morden College? Or the now forsaken Greenwich Observatory, the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, or the exquisite early chapel and gallery of Emmanuel? Wren had his failures; the author has the courage to include the Sheldonian Theatre among them. He had prepared plans for Windsor too. We need not regret that he was prevented from "surmounting several of the larger towers with domes."

Mr. Dutton is not wholly concerned

with Wren ; he glances at one or two of his predecessors, and more fully at his pupils and successors. Wren's work is on the whole so recognizable that there may seem some incongruity in identifying Vanbrugh with his tradition. This remarkable artist was innovator rather than successor—challenging Wren's sober standards by the exuberance of his ambition. Some of Hawksmoor's designs too may seem far enough removed from his master's.

But when we think of Gibbs or Kent, Hugh May or Henry Bell, with many others, often anonymous, whose buildings still ornament countryside or country town, we readily admit the author's claim to carry on the Wren tradition midway or more in the eighteenth century. Few readers can hope to know all the buildings here described and illustrated. Mr. Dutton knows his subject thoroughly and uses his learning without pedantry. The lavish illustrations are placed conveniently next the matter—an example which might well be imitated.

W. THOMSON HILL

A HUNDRED YEARS OF BRITISH PAINTING, 1851-1951, by Hesketh Hubbard. *Longmans*. 30s.

FRENCH, FLEMISH AND BRITISH ART, by Roger Fry. *Chatto & Windus*. 15s.

FAMOUS PAINTINGS, by Alice Elizabeth Chase. *Macdonald*. 18s.

The first half of the nineteenth century was the most radiant period in the whole history of British painting. At no other time has there been such a brilliant muster of artists as Constable, Cotman, Crome, Girtin, Lawrence, Raeburn and Turner. "England seemed to be ready for a new Renaissance," Roger Fry wrote in his *Reflections on British Painting*, "and then by 1850, scarcely anything was left of this glorious promise ; British art had sunk to a level of trivial in-

eptitude." Hesketh Hubbard takes this unpromising phase as the starting point of his survey. He carries a light eagerly into the dimness of the mid-nineteenth century and, sweeping away the accumulated dust from a number of half-forgotten things, describes them with a well-informed and entertaining commentary. The plan of the book is a decade by decade chronicle of British painting from the time of the Great Exhibition until the Festival of Britain. Each chapter spans a period of ten years, and is divided into two parts. The first half sets the scene with a description of conditions and events in the world of art ; the second deals with the lives and works of individual artists.

"When I consider . . . the greatness of British civilization as a whole, its immense services to humanity in certain directions . . . I have to admit sadly that British art is not altogether worthy of that civilization." Again, the words are taken from Roger Fry's book. "But that does not mean," he wrote, "that it is not intensely interesting, that it does not merit the most patient and sympathetic appreciation."

Mr. Hubbard is consistently generous in his recognition of deserving merit. The first fifty years of his survey spans a period of British painting which is a large and easy target for criticism and ridicule. "Landseer had become Monarch of the Glen," said Roger Fry scornfully, "and Frith was teaching people to give up all this nonsense about art." Mr. Hubbard, in his approach, avoids the main roads of generalization and makes an exhaustive, personal exploration of the more rewarding bypaths. His method is an enthusiastic disentangling of fine qualities from defects ; and his assessments of individual painters have unique value because, as a painter himself, he writes with the advantage of a painter's understanding. Moreover, Mr. Hubbard writes with a sincere impartiality, which is especially noteworthy because, as is often apparent, artists' opinions of each other's work are frequently con-

troversial and seldom free from prejudice. Nevertheless, the narrative derives its momentum from Mr. Hubbard's lively and detailed reconstruction of the settings in which the artists lived and worked. He describes the patronage that the painters enjoyed, sought or lacked, the rough-and-tumble of artists' quarrels, the give and take of merciless criticism, the underhand activities of copyists and forgers, the development of divers art societies and the reciprocating effects of contact between British and Continental schools of painting. The documenting of such a full and fascinating history must have entailed considerable research and long, patient checking of many sources of reference. One error, however, deserves correction. In a comment on the Australian Art Exhibition of 1923, Mr. Hubbard speaks of the "salacious drawings of Lionel Lindsay." Obviously, he has confused Sir Lionel with his brother, Norman.

Of Roger Fry, Mr. Hubbard writes, "—he might well be called a second Ruskin—". Whether or not the description is apt, it is certain that Fry had attributes that are rare in contemporary criticism. He wrote simply and with the dignity of conviction; at times, he wrote beautifully. The reappearance of these three books in one volume is an agreeable reminder of the quality of his criticisms.

Both Roger Fry's book and Mr. Hubbard's are well furnished with illustrations. No book on painting, least of all a children's book, can dispense with pictures. Miss Chase tells in her preface of a small boy who said to his friend: "See, Hanky, the words are for the people who can't read the pictures." This is a lovely book with 50 coloured reproductions of famous paintings and over a hundred pictures in black and white.

F. W. WENTWORTH-SHEILDS

CHILDREN'S FASHIONS OF THE XIXth CENTURY: With an Introduction by James Laver. *B. T. Batsford. 7s. 6d.*

Mr. James Laver has written an interesting and comprehensive introduction to this light, charming and inadequate book on children's fashions of the nineteenth century. The 16 coloured plates which are described by Mr. Laver do not cover the whole of the century—there are none illustrating the first thirty years, none for the 1840's and none for the 1890's. As Mr. Laver so truly says, at the beginning of the century children were dressed for the first time sensibly in loose clothes without constriction round the throat and waist. His point would have told more if it had been illustrated.

He raises an amusing question when he describes the feminine clothes of small boys in the 1860's. It is often impossible to distinguish between brothers and sisters in their velvet dresses, frilly drawers and plumed hats. If the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, cannot one perhaps suggest that the Siege of Ladysmith be attributed to the endurance shown by small boys in wearing clothes like their sister's? Dress is an expression of the wearer's personality and it is sad to think of the Victorian boy forced into this ridiculous mould by his mamma. It is no wonder that he reacted when older, and the heavy-handed Victorian father may have easily sprung from this earlier feminine nonsense in the nursery.

Little girls were of course no better off and the stays, petticoats, button boots and tight gloves, not to mention the slavish copying of mamma's crinoline and bustle, must have repressed any child. Were these clothes perhaps responsible for another reaction and has the emancipation of women, the Suffrage Movement itself, risen from the restrictions of flannel and whalebone? Mr. Laver's stimulating text could have been illustrated more fully and with greater discrimination.

ELISABETH JAMES

BOOKS ON THE TABLE

There are three ways of saying: "I've no time for novels these days"—rueful, complacent, or scornful, and the last of them more than hints that what is meant are *modern* novels. So does the complacent way, this time without intended damnation, for it is broadly true that as we grow older we come to prefer the favourites of youth. Although perhaps at present there is something other than the excuse of advancing age. For violence, degradation and pain are faithfully mirrored by the novelist, whose artificiality of plot is grotesquely yoked with 'realism', or whose brittle satire is no weapon for hacking a jungle path to the blessed reassurance (which we are all longing for) that right must triumph before the last page is reached. Nevertheless, reading ought to be a pattern, and this is surely spoilt if the novel-form is crowded out of it through lack of time—a real reason for the rueful way.

Warmly recommended

But the man with the scythe relaxed his tyranny to good purpose over Christmas (spent in a quiet fold of the Herefordshire hills above the twisting Wye) during the reading of *RAIN ON THE PAVEMENTS* by Roland Camberton (*John Lehmann*. 10s. 6d.). Here is a story deserving a niche in the memory if only for its uniqueness in being better than the 'blurb' says it is. Its merits, however, are more positive than this would imply and even its faults in a second novel are not to be censured, capable of elimination as they are with broadened experience and a clearer realization of the need to hurry slowly. The characters are so strongly delineated that when some of them disappear they tear holes. Yunkel, for example, is too complete an entity to fade out, and Philip, who has some excuse because his father whisks him back to France,

is yet hardly forgiven his desertion. Conversely Stanley, later on, never once impinges himself, but Mr. Essand, the chess-playing schoolmaster, is as good and rich and true as anyone of the same profession out of Chesterton or Mr. Compton Mackenzie. And when the wise and weary Oxford don asks the fatal question at the scholarship interview, the reader feels like David, "knocked off his balance" by its unexpectedness. Then, without knowing the *milieu* even remotely of life among the Jews of Hackney, one recognizes it swiftly, unerringly, in these pages. Praise, one assumes, could be no higher; Mr. Camberton is cordially invited to continue not only the history of David but to show some of his elders and *soi-disant* betters how to write so authentically and compellingly.

Some English fiction

To show how Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, Jane Austen, Scott, Dickens, Emily Brontë, Thackeray and George Eliot have done it, is the purpose of Arnold Kettle's *AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH NOVEL* (*Hutchinson's University Library*. 8s. 6d.). He discusses what it is and why it began, with eighteenth century writers receiving their due as contributors to the art, and with a survey of some of the problems inherent in nineteenth century novel-making. Thus *Emma*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Oliver Twist*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Vanity Fair* and *Middlemarch* are examined for clues to their inception and purpose. A second volume dealing with Henry James to the present day is promised and if it adheres as successfully to the policy of concentrating on "a limited number of specific books rather than to offer a condensed literary history," it should be equally instructive and stimulating.

This one is subtitled : "I—To George Eliot" who, Dr. Kettle thinks, provides an appropriate break because her "great novel is in a number of respects the culminating point of Victorian fiction."

Tragic Maggie

A year ago *Chatto & Windus* published *Middlemarch* in their Zodiac series of reprints, and now they add *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS* (12s. 6d.), with *Adam Bede* in preparation for the near future. If the first is George Eliot's masterpiece, with its never-to-be-forgotten descriptions (as of the impact of Rome on Dorothea), Maggie Tulliver whose

life-struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul, one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows for ever rising again,

is perhaps the novelist's masterpiece of character-drawing, set against "the rush of the water and the booming of the mill" bringing "a dreamy deafness which seems to heighten the peacefulness of the scene."

Old Father Thames

From the peacefulness of the scene about the river Wye, and from "where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea," we turn back to the one that most spells "England, home and beauty" to the exile, *THE THAMES* (*Batsford*. 21s.), in company with the author, L. T. C. Rolt, who makes a journey from mouth to source. Among the many beautiful illustrations, the 28 in colour—dating from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth and including Caneletto's painting which gives the river a Venetian look—do justice to its nobility, gentleness and gracious surroundings. There is a pale gold Oxford on the horizon from William Turner's vantage point (recalling Arnold and "The Scholar Gipsy") on Wytham Hill, in whose woods we used to pick "windflowers" and primroses. There is Kelmscott

and its associations with Morris; there are Old and New London Bridges, and Richmond and Gravesend and Henley and Battersea; there is Eton with its chapel, and from various attractive angles there is Windsor Castle.

Victoria's friend

Here it was that Disraeli became the confidant of his sovereign to the dismay of his enemies, and from here she sent to him her loving messages while he lay dying, as we are reminded by Hesketh Pearson in *DIZZY* (*Methuen*. 21s.). Also he reminds us once again of how unobtrusively accomplished he is as a biographer. He handles this complex and colourful creature—whose wit, patience, brilliance, imagination and showmanship brought him ridicule long before he began to be revered—with as deft and sure a touch as Disraeli's own. Some of the chapter headings are admirably sly: "Ben-Vivian", "Partly Sartorial", "Social, Political and Amorous", "The Greasy Pole", "Glory and the Gout", and Mr. Pearson's treatment of the statesman as novelist is particularly effective:

Few people would be willing to assert that *The Picture of Dorian Grey* is a lifelike representation of human beings or a vivid narrative of probable occurrences; but compared with *Alroy* it is a masterpiece of photograph reality and scientific exactitude.

Toujours Wilde

Would that St. John Ervine had been granted a like sparkle and verve to help him with "a present time appraisal" of OSCAR WILDE (*Allen & Unwin*. 18s.). At this, Hesketh Pearson's own biography of Wilde seems to nod sardonic assent from the shelf above, as well it might for it is certainly a model of how to deal with this difficult subject. Mr. Ervine seems to have reached his estimate as the result of putting up and aiming at several Aunt Sallies, so tall and protuberant that they could scarcely be missed by the poorest marksman; they are quite beneath the skill of a St. John Ervine. We all know that Wilde

had tainted and indeed sordid ancestry, but who dare say, as this appraiser does, that he "would have done better to have died in his childhood as his sister, Isola, who followed him, did"? Most of us, and several men of genius, would have been wiped out under such a condition of survival as purity of heredity, without a chance to conquer, and often magnificently, the handicap. Then nobody ever made the claim that Wilde was a Shakespeare or even a Sheridan. Yet his plays, iridescent and about as substantial as the wings of a butterfly, are handled in a manner befitting the dissection of a whale. And we need no added emphasis on Wilde's evil friends, on Carson overcoming him in the court room, nor on the done-to-death tragedy of the man, in a book that, says the dust-jacket, "sets out to judge Wilde, not as a subject for pity or reproach, but as a writer and especially as a dramatist." St. John Ervine does truly lack compassion—and humour too, and his abundant prejudices (on a number of topics) are a poor substitute for either. It is all very disappointing, for he starts promisingly enough and he writes so well, and respect for him and his attainments initiated a sympathetic hearing which has wastefully and woefully trickled away in the reading.

The eyes of a Frenchman

The pity is supplied by André Gide in his essays and journal-jottings assembled under the title of OSCAR WILDE (*William Kimber*. 10s. 6d.). Not that this slender volume is a biography, nor is it a study of the plays. *De Profundis* has a chapter to itself and, for the rest, the criticism (always trenchant, cordial and this side idolatry) is incidental to the recording of personal impressions and reminiscences. The

book is valuable because it contains work which, as Gide said, is difficult to unearth elsewhere and because its contemporary assessments of the Irishman are entirely free from sentimentalism.

Dancing coloured balls

And, lest we ourselves become bogged down in a sentimental regret for the lost wit of a Wilde, let us laugh again at FOURTH LEADERS FROM THE TIMES 1951 (*The Times Publishing Co.* 10s. 6d.), notwithstanding their "studiously maintained tradition of decorum and dignity." It is pleasant to greet afresh the half-remembered jesting truths we pondered during damp, gloomy mornings when we sourly averted our eyes from fellow bus-travellers and found comfort in finding their prototypes on the leader page. Only one complaint seems to call for registration: for the price, Osbert Lancaster's drawing might have been included as a frontispiece instead of only on the paper jacket which perisheth.

The Londoner's author

Now, having delighted in Mr. Emlyn Williams' presentation of the works of Dickens, first on television and more recently in the theatre, and having found his "readings" much funnier than most of our own attempts at Dickens, it is appropriate pleasure to give a little book the final honourable mention here. LONDON HOMES OF DICKENS (*Chambers*. 3s. 6d.) is by Frank Green, with Walter Dexter's Introduction, and it is lavishly embellished with the whole-page drawings of Charles Pearce. Not even those who dislike his humour will disagree that in these houses, as the author says, Dickens "gathered that knowledge of London, accurate and true, which adds a charm to his stories."

GRACE BANYARD

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